Wooed by a Sphinx of Aztlan

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By George Hartmann

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Wooed by a Sphinx *of* Aztlan

THE ROMANCE OF A HERO OF OUR LATE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

AND

INCIDENTS OF INTEREST FROM THE LIFE OF A WESTERN PIONEER

BY

GEORGE HARTMANN

PRESCOTT

GEORGE HARTMANN

1907

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By GEORGE HARTMANN

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This volume
Is most respectfully inscribed
by the Author to

His Excellency,
The President of the United States of America,
THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
As Lieutenant-Colonel of United States
Volunteers, he led the regiment of
"ROUGH RIDERS"
To Victory
In the charge on San Juan Hill, Cuba,
July 1, 1898.
A gallant soldier, he "Rode Rough" over
Spanish tyranny and pride.

Memorial

That this modest little volume may serve to keep
forever fresh the memory of a hero,

Captain William Owen O'Neill, U. S. V.,

Late Mayor of Prescott, Arizona,
is the fervent wish of

The Author

PREFACE

THIS narrative relates some extraordinary experiences from a strangely turbulent life.

From my boyhood to the present time have I lived on the Western frontier of the United States.

Fate cast me in my youth on the banks of the Hassayampa, a stream of Arizona.

Thirsting for gold, I drank deeply of its lying waters,* and therefore must this tale, which purported to be the chronicle of facts, now be classed as fiction.

However, the reader is authorized to accept any part of this story as true—if it comes within the scope of possibility—but is cautioned to regard anything doubtful with suspicion; such is to be taken only as indicated in the proverbial ancient formula, *Cum grano salis.*

The Author.

* It is said in Arizona that whoever drinks water of the Hassayampa can nevermore tell the truth.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	A Frail Bark tossed on Life's Tempestuous Sea	1
II	A Perilous Journey	15
III	The Mystery of the Smoking Ruin. Stalking a Warrior. . The Ambush	32
IV	A Strange Land and stranger People	38
V	On the Rio Grande. An Abstract of the Author's Genealogy of Maternal Lineage	49
VI	Indian Lore. The Wily Navajo	56
VII	The Fight in the Sand Hills. The Phantom Dog	66
VIII	With the Navajo Tribe	94
IX	In Arizona	103
X	At the Shrine of a "Sphinx of Aztlan"	110

CHAPTER I

A FRAIL BARK, TOSSED ON LIFE'S TEMPESTUOUS SEAS

A NATIVE of Germany, I came to the United States soon after the Civil War, a healthy, strong boy of fifteen years. My destination was a village on the Rio Grande, in New Mexico, where I had relatives. I was expected to arrive at Junction City, in the State of Kansas, on a day of June, 1867, and proceed on my journey with a train of freight wagons over the famous old Santa Fé trail.

Junction City was then the terminal point of a railway system which extended its track ever westward across the great American plains, over the virgin prairie, the native haunt of the buffalo and fleet-footed antelope, the iron horse trespassing on the hunting ground of the Arapahoe and Comanche Indian tribes. As a mercantile supply depot for New Mexico and Colorado, Junction City was the port from whence a numerous fleet of prairie schooners sailed, laden with the necessities and luxuries of an advancing civilization. But not every sailor

reached his destined port, for many were they who were sent by the pirates of the plains over unknown trails, to the shores of the great Beyond, and their scalpless bodies were left on the prairie, a prey to vultures and coyotes.

If the plans of my relatives had developed according to program, this story would probably not have been told. Indians on the war-path attacked the wagon train which I was presumed to have joined, a short distance out from Junction City. They killed and scalped several teamsters and also a young German traveler; stampeded and drove off a number of mules and burned up several wagons. This was done while fording the Arkansas River, near Fort Dodge. I was delayed near Kansas City under circumstances which preclude the supposition of chance and indicate a subtle and inexorably fatal power at work for the preservation of my life—a force which with the giant tread of the earthquake devastates countries and lays cities in ruins; that awful power which on wings of the cyclone slays the innocent babe in its cradle and harms not the villain, or vice versa; that inscrutable spirit which creates and lovingly shelters the sparrow over night and then at dawn hands it to the owl to serve him for his breakfast. Safe I was

under the guidance of the same loving, paternal Providence which in death delivereth the innocent babe from evil and temptation, shields the little sparrow from all harm forever, and incidentally provides thereby for the hungry owl.

I should have changed cars at Kansas City, but being asleep at the critical time and overlooked by the conductor, I passed on to a station beyond the Missouri River. There the conductor aroused me and put me off the train without ceremony. In consequence thereof I was forced to return, and I reached the river without any mishap, as it was a beautiful moonlight night. I crossed the long bridge with anxiety, for it was a primitive-looking structure, built on piles, and I had to step from tie to tie, looking continually down at the swirling waters of the great, muddy river. As I realized the possibility of meeting a train, I crossed over it, running. At last I reached the opposite shore. It was nearly dawn now, and I walked to the only house in sight, a long, low building of logs and, being very tired, I sat down on the veranda and soon fell asleep. It was not long after sunrise that a sinister, evil-looking person, smelling vilely of rum, woke me up roughly and asked me what I did there. When he learned that

I was traveling to New Mexico and had lost my way, he grew very polite and invited me into the house.

We entered a spacious hall, which served as a dining-room, where eight young ladies were busily engaged arranging tables and furniture. The man intimated that he kept a hotel and begged the young ladies to see to my comfort and bade me consider myself as being at home. The girls were surprised and delighted to meet me and overwhelmed me with questions. They expressed the greatest concern and interest when they learned that I was about to cross the plains.

"Poor little Dutchy," said one, "how could your mother send you out all alone into the cruel, wide world!" "Mercy, and among the Indians, too," said another. When I replied that my dear mother had sent me away because she loved me truly, as she knew that I had a better chance to prosper in the United States than in the Fatherland, they called me a cute little chap and smothered me with their kisses.

The tallest and sweetest of these girls (her name was Rose) pulled my ears teasingly and asked if her big, little man was not afraid of the Indians. "Not I, madame," I replied; "for my father charged me to be honest and loyal,

brave and true, and fear not and prove myself a worthy scion of the noble House of Von Siebeneich." "Oh, my! Oh, my!" cried the young ladies, and "Did you ever!" and "No, I never!" and "Who would have thought it!" Regarding me wide-eyed with astonishment, they listened with bated breath as I explained that I was a lineal descendant of the Knight Hartmann von Siebeneich, who achieved everlasting fame through impersonating the Emperor Frederick (Barbarossa) of Germany, in order to prevent his capture by the enemy. I told how the commander of the Italian army, inspired with admiration by the desperate valor of the loyal knight, released him and did honor him greatly. And how this noble knight, my father's ancestor, followed the Emperor Frederick to the Holy Land and fought the Saracens. "And," added I, "my father's great book of heraldry contains the legend of the curse which fell on our house through the villainy of the Imperial Grand Chancellor of Blazonry, who was commanded to devise and procure a brand-new heraldic escutcheon for our family.

"He blazoned our shield with the ominous motto, 'In der fix, Haben nix,' over gules d'or on a stony field, which was sown to a harvest of

tares and oats, and embossed with a whirlwind rampant. As they were in knightly honor bound to live up to the motto on their shield, my ancestors were now doomed to remain poor forever. At last they took service with the free city of Hamburg, where they settled finally and became honored citizens."

Happening to remember my mother's admonishment not to annoy people with too much talk, I apologized to the young ladies. Smilingly they begged me to continue, for they seemed to enjoy my boyish prattle.

"Listen, now, girls," said Rose laughingly to her companions, "now, I shall make him open his mother's closet and show us her choicest family skeleton." "Oh, no, Miss Rose," I protested, "my mother has indeed a great closet, but it is full of good things to eat and contains no skeletons." "You little goosie-gander; you don't understand," replied Miss Rose; "I was only joking. Of course, your mother kept the door carefully locked to keep you boys from foraging?" "No, madame," said I, "it was not necessary to lock the door." "Did she keep a guard, then?" said Rose. "Oh, yes," I replied, "and it was very hard to pass in without being knocked down." "Was it a man?" she asked

mischievously. "Why, yes; mamma kept a strong, old Limburger right behind the door," I said.

When the girls had ceased laughing, Rose said, "What did your mother tell you when you left for America?" "My mother," I answered, "implored me with tearful eyes to ever remember how my father's great-great-grandmother Brunhilde (who was exceedingly beautiful) was enticed into the depths of a dark forest by a wily, old German King. Indiscreetly and unsuspectingly she followed him. There clandestinely did he favor her graciously by adding a bar sinister to our knightly escutcheon and a strain of the blood royal to our family. This happened long, long ago in the dark ages or some other dark place—it may have been the Schwarzwald—and it was the curse of the stony field that did it. 'Oh, my poor, poor daughters!' sighed mother. 'Alas!' she continued, 'the German people are so careless. If this had occurred in England, that nation would have done our family great honor by prefixing the distinctive title of "Fitz" to the surname of a certain scion of our knightly house.

" 'Oh, my son,' mother urged me, 'we count on you to restore the unaccountably long-lost

prestige of our ancient family. In America, behind the counters of your uncle's counting-rooms, you shall acquire great wealth, and his Majesty the Kaiser will be pleased to re-invest you with the coronet of a count. Then, as a noble count will you be of some account in the exclusive circle of the four hundred of the great city of New York. Beautiful heiresses will crave the favor of your acquaintance, and if wise, you will lead the most desirable one on the market, the lovely Miss Billiona Roque-a-Fellaire to the altar. His Majesty the Kaiser will then graciously change the "no-account" words on our family's escutcheon to the joyful motto, "Mit Geld," and lift the blighting curse from our noble house.' "

Next I related how surprised I was when I saw the great city of New York. However, I expected to see a large city of many houses, ever so high and some higher yet, and therefore I was not so very much surprised, after all.

But in Illinois I first saw the wonderful forest. Oh, the virgin forest! Never had I seen such grand, beautiful trees, oak and hickory, ash and sycamore, maple, elm, and many more giant trees, unknown to me, and peopled by a multitude of wild birds of the brightest plumage.

There were birds and squirrels everywhere! I actually saw a sky-blue bird with a topknot, and another of a bright scarlet color, and gorgeous woodpeckers who were too busy hammering to look at me even. Oh, but they did not sing like the birds in Germany! All were very grave and sad. They seemed to know, as everybody else did, that I was a stranger in their land, for they gave me all sorts of useful information and advice, with many nods of their little heads.

"Peep, peep!" counseled the bluebird. "Thank you," I replied, "seeing is believing." "Whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will," cried a large, spotted bird. "That," thought I, "is a prize fighter." "Cheat, cheat!" urged a pious-looking cardinal, who evidently mistook me for a gambler. "Don't," roared a bullfrog, who was seated on a log and winked his eye at me. "There is an honest man," I thought. "Shake, good sir." In consternation and surprise, I instantly released his hand. "*How* is it possible to be both honest and slippery at the same time! This must be a Yankee-man," thought I.

I saw real moss, green and velvety as the richest carpet, and I drank of singing, bubbling waters. Many kinds of berries and nuts, hard to crack, grew in the wild glens of the forest. I

gathered flowers, larger and more beautiful than any I had ever seen, but they lacked the perfume of German flowers; only the roses were the same.

Many children did I see, but they had not the rosy cheeks of German children. And I met the strongest of all beasts on earth and tracked him to his native lair; and there, in the sacred groves of the Illini, I worried him sorely, and as David did unto Goliath, so did I unto him; and sundown come, I slew him. And for threescore days and ten the smoke of battle scented the balmy air.

The young ladies laughed heartily and said that never before had they been so delightfully entertained, and they gave me sweets and nice things to eat, and said they hoped I might stay with them forever and a day. We exchanged confidences, and they warned me to beware of the landlord, Mr. Peterson, who had been known to rob people. They advised me to secrete my money, if perchance I had any. I thanked them kindly, replying that I had only one dollar in my purse. This was true, but I did not tell them that I had sewed a large sum in banknotes and some German silver into the northeast, or right-hand, corner of my kite's tail when I set out on my journey to the West.

I complimented these charming girls on their good fortune to be in the service of so generous a gentleman as Mr. Peterson seemed to be; for I saw that they wore very fine dresses and had many jewels. "Why, you little greenie," said Miss Rose, "Mr. Peterson does not pay us high wages." "Oh, I see, how romantic! how nice!" exclaimed I. "You do as the ladies in the good old time of chivalry, when knights donned their colors and sallied forth to battle with lions and tigers. You crave largesse, and the gentlemen favor you with money and jewels." Then the youngest girl laughed and said, "Oh, you pore, innicent bairn, and how do yez ken all this? and how did yez know that Misther Payterson kapes a tiger at all, at all, begorra!" Another young lady said, "Dutchy, I reckon yore daddy is right smart of a cunning old fox!" "Madame," replied I, indignantly, "my father is no fox, but a minister of the Gospel." "Oh, this bye is the son of a praste," screamed the loveliest girl in all Missouri. "Indade, I misthrusted the little scamp. Och! oh and where is me brooch? I thought all the time the little divvil was afther something. Thieves! Murther!" Confusion in pandemonium now reigned supreme. For one precious moment the

air seemed full of long-legged stockings and delicate hands and purses. Luckily, the brooch was found and peace restored at once. And Rose said, "Oh, girls, how could you!" and she begged my pardon and said they did not mean it. And then I made myself very useful and agreeable to these lovely maids, lacing their shoes and dusting their chamber, and right gallantly did I serve them until evening.

After supper reappeared my evil genius in the person of Mr. Peterson, who took me out to the woodshed. "Dutchy, I have decided to adopt you as my only son; have you ever bucked a wood saw?" said he, and a sardonic leer distorted his evil features. After I recovered sufficiently from the shock, I answered indignantly, "Sir, know ye not that I have pledged my service to the vestal virgins of yon temple?" "Ha! Ha!" laughed the villain, "get busy now, son, and if by morning this wood has not been cut, you will go minus your breakfast." Thereupon he locked me in.

Caught as a rat in a trap, I had no alternative but to comply with this man's outrageous demands. Despairingly I plied that abominable instrument of torture, the national bucksaw of America. This is the only American institu-

tion I could never accustom myself to. I have endured bucking bronchos in New Mexico, I have bucked the tiger in Arizona, but to buck a wood-saw—perish the thought! Sore and weary, I lay down in a corner of the shed on some hay and fell asleep. I dreamed that I heard screams of women, mingled with song and laughter, and through it all the noise of music and dancing. Then the dream changed into a horrible nightmare in the shape of a big sawhorse which kicked at me and threatened me with hard labor.

Toward morning, when the door was opened and a drunken ruffian entered, I awoke from my troubled slumbers. "Hi, Dutchy, and have yez any tin?" he threatened. "Kind sir," I replied, "when I departed for the West I left all my wealth behind me." Verily, now I was proving myself the worthy scion of valiant men, who had laid aside hauberk, sword, and lance, taken up the Bible and stole, and thenceforth fought only with the weapon of Samson, the strong!

"And so yez are, by special appointment, chamberlain to the gurruls by day, and ivver sawing wood at nighttime! Bedad! I'll shpile the thrick for Misther Payterson, the thaving baste, and take this little greenhorn out of his

clutches and sind him about his business." With these words, he opened the door for me and I escaped.

Farewell, lovely maids of Kansas and Missouri! If mayhap this writing comes to you, oh, let us meet again; my heart yearns to greet you and your granddaughters. For surely, though it seems to me as yesterday, the blossoms of forty summers have fallen in our path and whitened our hair.

CHAPTER II

A PERILOUS JOURNEY

AFTER several days I arrived at the end of my railway journey, Junction City, without delay or accident. The trip was not lacking in interesting details. The monotony of the never ending prairie was at times enlivened by herds of buffalo and antelope. On one occasion they delayed our train for several hours. An enormous herd of thousands upon thousands of buffalo crossed the railroad track in front of our train. Bellowing, crowding, and pushing, they were not unlike the billows of an angry sea as it crashes and foams over the submerged rocks of a dangerous coast. Their rear guard was made up of wolves, large and small. They followed the herd stealthily, taking advantage of every hillock and tuft of buffalo grass to hide themselves. The gray wolf or lobo, larger and heavier than any dog, and adorned with a bushy tail was a fierce-looking animal, to be sure. The smaller ones were called coyotes or prairie wolves, and are larger than foxes and of a gray-brown color. These are the scavengers of the

plains, and divide their prey with the vultures of the air.

At times we passed through villages of the prairie dog, consisting of numberless little mounds, with their owners sitting erect on top. When alarmed, they would yelp and dive into their lairs in the earth. These little rodents share their habitations with a funny-looking little owl and the rattlesnake. I believe, however, that the snake is not there as a welcome visitor, but comes in the rôle of a self-appointed assessor and tax gatherer. I picked up and adopted a little bulldog which had been either abandoned on the cars or lost by its owner, not then thinking that this little *Cerberus,* as I called it, should later prove, on one occasion, to be my true and only friend when I was in dire distress and in the extremity of peril.

The town of Junction City, which numbered less than a score of buildings and tents, was in a turmoil of excitement, resembling a nest of disturbed hornets. Several hundred angry-looking men crowded the only street, every one armed to the teeth. The great majority were dark-skinned Mexicans, but here and there I noticed the American frontiersman, the professional buffalo hunter and scout. These were men of

proved courage, and I observed that the Mexicans avoided looking them squarely in the face; and when meeting on the public thoroughfare, they invariably gave them precedence of passage.

I found opportunity to hire out to a pleasant-looking young Mexican as driver of a little two-mule provision wagon. In this manner I earned my passage across the plains. Don José Lopez, that was his name, said that I need not do much actual work, as he would have his peons attend to the care of the mules and have them harness up as well. He also told me that we would have to delay our departure until every team present in the town had its cumulation of cargo. They dared not travel singly, he said, for the Indians were very hostile. In consequence whereof our departure was delayed for six weeks. I camped with the Mexicans and accustomed myself very soon to their mode of living. The fact that I understood their language and spoke it quite well was a never-ending surprise and mystery to them. I took daily walks over the prairie to the junction of two creeks, a short distance from the town, bathed and whiled away the time with target practice, and soon became very proficient in the use of firearms.

The banks of these little streams would have

made a delightful picnic ground, covered as they were by a luxuriant growth of grasses and bushes and some large trees also, mostly of the cottonwood variety. But there were no families of ladies and children here to enjoy the lovely spot. A feeling of intense uneasiness seemed to pervade the very air and a weird presentiment of impending horror covered the prairie as with a ghostly shroud. The specter of a wronged, persecuted race ever haunted the white man's conscience. In vain did the red man breast the rising tide of civilization. In their sacred tepees, their medicine men invoked the aid of their great Spirit and they were answered.

The Spirit sent them for an ally, an army of grasshoppers, which darkened the sun by its countless numbers. It impeded the progress of the iron horse, but not for long. Then he sent them continued drouth, but the pale face heeded not. "Onward, westward ever, the star of empire took its course."

We camped out on the prairie within a short distance and in full sight of the town. I made the acquaintance of a merchant, Mr. Samuel Dreifuss, who kept a little store of general merchandise. This gentleman liked to converse with me in the German tongue and was very

kind to me, even offering to employ me at a liberal salary, which I, of course, thankfully declined. One morning after breakfast I went to this store to purchase an article of apparel. The door was unlocked and I entered, but found no one present. I waited a while, and as Mr. Dreifuss did not appear, I knocked at the bedroom door, which was connected with the store. Receiving no response to my knocks, I opened the door and entered. There was poor Mr. Dreifuss lying stone dead on his couch. I knew that he was dead, for his hands were cold and clammy to the touch. I was struck with astonishment. The day before had I spoken to him, when he appeared to be hale and hearty. There were some ugly, black spots on his face, and I thought that it was very queer. I did not see any marks of violence on his person and nothing unusual about the premises. I looked around carefully, as a boy is apt to do when something puzzles him. Then I thought I would go uptown and tell about this strange circumstance.

The store was the first building met with in the town if a person came from the railway station. As I went toward the next house, which was a short distance away, I was hailed by a tall, broad-shouldered man with long hair, who

commanded me to halt. I kept right on, however, meaning to tell him about my gruesome discovery. As I advanced toward him he retreated, and I called to him to have no fear, as I did not intend to shoot. The big man shook with laughter and cried, "Hold, boy, stop there a minute until I tell you something. They say that 'Wild Bill' never feared man, but I fear you, a mere boy. Did you come out of that store?" "Yes, sir," I said. "And did you see the Jew?" "Yes, sir," I answered; "Mr. Dreifuss is dead." "How do you know that?" he questioned. "His hands feel cold as ice," I said, "and there is a black spot on his nose." Again the man laughed and said, "Do you know what killed him?" "I do not know, sir," I answered, "but I was going uptown to inquire." "Well," said the scout, "Mr. Dreifuss had the cholera." "That's too bad," said I; "let us go back and see if we can be of any assistance." "No, you don't," said the long-haired scout; "I have been stationed here, as marshal of the town, to warn people away from the place. You take my advice and go to the creek and plunge in with all your clothes and play for an hour in the water, then dry yourself, go back to camp, and keep mum!" This was the year of the

cholera. It started somewhere down south, and many people died from it in the city of St. Louis, and it followed the railway through Kansas to the end of the track. Many soldiers died also at Fort Harker, which was farther out West on the plains.

At last we started on our perilous journey, an imposing caravan of one hundred and eighty wagons, each drawn by five yoke of oxen. Our force numbered upward of two hundred and fifty men, the owners, teamsters, train masters or mayordomos and the herders of the different outfits; all were Mexicans except myself.

Several days were spent in crossing the little stream formed by the confluence of two creeks. The water was quite deep and had to be crossed by means of a ferryboat. Here I met with my first adventure, which nearly cost me my life. My wagon was loaded with supplies and provisions and with several pieces of oak timber, intended for use in our train. When I drove down the steep bank on to the ferryboat, the timbers, which were not well secured, slid forward and pushed me off my seat, so that I fell right under the mules just as they stepped on the ferry. The frightened mules trampled and kicked fearfully. I lay still, thinking that if I moved they would step on me, as their hoofs

missed my head by inches only. I thought of my mother and how sorry she would be if she could see me now, but I was thinking, ever thinking and lay very still. Then my guardian angel, in the person of a Mexican, crawled under the wagon from the rear end and pulled me by my heels, back to safety under the wagon. When I came out from under I threw my hat in the air and gave a whoop and cheer, at which the Mexicans were greatly enthused. They yelled excitedly and our mayordomo exclaimed: *"Caramba, mira que diablito!"* (Egad, see the little devil!)

We traveled in two parallel lines, about fifty feet apart and kept the spare cattle and remounts of horses, as also the small provision teams between the lines. A cavalcade of train owners and mayordomos was constantly scouting in all directions, but they never ventured out of sight of the traveling teams. We started daily at sunrise and traveled till noon or until we made the distance to our next watering place. Then we camped and turned our live stock out to rest and crop the prairie grass. After several hours we used to resume our journey until nightfall or later to our next camping ground. Every man had to take his turn about at herding cattle

and horses during the nighttime. Only the cooks were exempt from doing herd and guard duty.

We pitched our nightly camps by forming two closed half circles of our wagons, one on each side of the road so as to form a corral. By means of connecting the wagons with chains, this made a strong barricade, quite efficient to repulse the attacks of hostile Indians, if defended by determined men. Every freight train when in camp was a little fort in itself and an interesting sight at nighttime, when the blazing fires were surrounded by men who were cooking and passing the time in various ways. Some were cleaning and loading their guns, others mended their clothes. Here and there you would find some genius playing dreamy, monotonous Spanish airs on the guitar, in the midst of a merry group of dancing and singing young Mexicans, many of whom were not older than I. Card-playing seemed, however, to be their favorite pastime; all Mexicans are inveterate gamesters, who look upon the profession of gambling as an honorable and desirable occupation.

After the first day out I did not see an inebriated man in the whole party. The Mexicans are really a much maligned and slandered people. They are often charged with the sin

of postponing every imaginable thing until *mañana,* but, to do them justice, I must say that they drank every drop of liquor they carried on the first day out; also ate all the dainties which other people would have saved and relished for days to come. Surely, not *mañana,* but *ahora,* or "do it now" was their soul-stirring battle cry on this occasion.

After several days of travel we encountered herds of buffalo and mustangs or wild horses, and when our scouts reported numerous Indian signs, we advanced slowly and carefully, momentarily expecting an ambuscade and attack. Our column halted frequently while our horsemen explored suspicious-looking hillocks and ravines.

A dense column of smoke rose suddenly in our front, and I saw several detachments of Indian warriors on a little hill, who were evidently reconnoitering, and spying our strength, but did not expose themselves fully to view. Simultaneously columns of signal smoke arose in all directions round about. Instantly our lines closed in the front and rear and we came to an abrupt halt. What I saw then made my heart sink, for the drivers seemed to be paralyzed with terror. The very men who had heretofore found a great delight in trying to frighten me

with tales of Indian atrocities were now themselves scared out of their wits. Young and inexperienced though I was, I realized that to be now attacked by Indians meant to be slaughtered and scalped. Some of the men were actually crying from fright, seeming to be completely demoralized. I noticed how one of our men in loading his musket rammed home a slug of lead, forgetting his charge of powder entirely. The sight of this disgusted me so that I became furious, and in the measure that my anger rose my fear subsided and vanished. I railed at the poor fellow and abused and cursed him shamefully, threatening to kill him for being a coward and a fool. I made him draw the bullet and reload his musket in a proper manner.

When I grew older I acquired the faculty to curb the instinctive feeling of fear which is inborn in all creatures and undoubtedly is a wise provision of nature, necessary to the continuance of life and conducive to self-preservation. Knowing that all men who ever lived and all who now live must surely die, I failed to see anything particularly fearful in death. I may truthfully say that I have several times met death face to face squarely and feared not. On these occasions I tried not to escape what seemed

to be my final doom, but in the dim consciousness of mind that I should be dead long enough anyway, I tried to delay my departure to a better life as long as possible, exerting myself exceedingly to accomplish this purpose. Undoubtedly this must have made me a very undesirable person to contend with in a fight. Luckily for me, I have never been afflicted with a quarrelsome or vindictive mind. This is not a boastful or frivolous assertion, but is uttered in the spirit of thankfulness to the allwise Creator of Heaven and earth.

Looking around, I beheld a sight which cheered me mightily. There, a few yards ahead of my wagon, was a great hole in the ground, made by badgers, or it may have been the palace of a king of prairie dogs. Quickly I drove my team forward, right over it. Then, pretending to be rearranging my cargo, I took out the end gate of my wagon and covered the hole with it. Next, I wet some gunny sacks and placed them on the ground under the board. Now, thought I, here is my chance for an honorable retreat if anything should go wrong. I intended to close up the hole behind me with the wet sacks, taking the risk of snake bites in preference to the tender mercies of the Indians. As

these ground lairs take a turn a few feet down and are connected with various underground passages and have several outlets, I had a fair prospect to escape should the Indians discover my whereabouts, for they could neither burn nor smoke me out, and were not likely to take the time to reduce my fort by starvation. It took me but a very short time to make my preparations, and I did it unnoticed by my companions, who seemed fully preoccupied with their own troubles.

A horseman galloped up to our division, a great, swarthy, fierce-looking man, bearded like the pard. This man did not act like a scared person. One glance at the frightened faces of his countrymen sufficed to enlighten and also to enrage him.

"Señores," he said, "I perceive you are anxious and ready for a fight. I hope the Indians will accommodate us, as we are greatly in need of a little sport. It may happen that some of you will lose your scalps, and I hope that it is not you, Señor Felipe Morales. I should be very sorry for your poor old mother and your crippled sister, for who will support them if you should fail them? As for you, Señor Juan, it does not matter much if you never again breathe the air of New Mexico. Your young little wife

has not yet had an opportunity to know you fully, anyway, and your cousin, the strapping Don Isidro Chavez, will surely take the best of care of her. They say he calls on her daily to inquire after your welfare. Señor Cuzco Gonzales, as you might be unlucky enough to leave your bones on this prairie, I would advise you to make me heir to your garden of chile peppers. To be sure, I never saw a more tempting crop! Mayhap you will have no further use for chile, as the Indians are likely to heat your belly with hot coals, in lieu of peppers."

Then he called for the cook. Señor Doctor," he said, "prepare the medicine for this man, who is too sick to load a musket properly, and had to be shown how to do so by a little gringo, as I observed a while ago. Hold him, Señores." And they held him down while the cook administered the medicine, forcing it down his unwilling throat. The medicine was compounded from salt, and the prescribed dose was a handful of it dissolved in a tin cupful of water. This seemed to revive the patient's faltering spirit wonderfully. The cook, a half-witted fellow, was another man who seemed to have no fear. His eyes shone wickedly and he was stripped for the fight. A red bandanna kerchief

tied around his head, he glided stealthily about, thirsty for Indian blood as any wolf. They told me that his mother and sister had died at the hands of the cruel Apaches.

To me the rider said, "Señor Americanito, I know your gun is loaded right and is ready to shoot straight. Look you, if you plant a bullet just below an Indian's navel, you will see him do a double somersault, which is more wonderful to behold than any circus performance you ever saw,"

Here was a man good to see, a descendant of the famous Don Fernando Cortez, conquistador, and molded on the lines of Pizarro, the wily conqueror of Peru, and he heartened our crew amazingly. He exhorted the men to be brave and fight like Spaniards, and he prayed to the saints to preserve us; and piously remembering his enemies, he called on the devil to preserve the Indians. Such zealous devotion found merited favor with the blessed saints in Heaven, for they granted his prayer, and the Indians did not attack us that day.

On the following day, Don Emilio Cortez came again and asked me to ride with him as a scout. He had brought a young man to drive the team in my stead. Gladly I accepted his invitation. He arranged a pillion for his saddle

and mounted me behind him, facing the horse's tail. Then he passed a broad strap around his waist and my body and armed me with a Henry repeating rifle, then a new invention and a very serviceable gun. In this manner I had both hands free and made him the best sort of a rear guard. We cantered toward a sandy hill on our left. A coyote came our way, appearing from the crest of the hill. The animal was looking back over its shoulder and veered off when it scented us. Don Emilio halted his horse. "That coyote is driven by Indians," said he; "do you think you can hit it at this distance?" I thought I could by aiming high and a little forward. At the crack of my rifle the coyote yelped and bit its side, then rolling on the grass, expired. *"Carajo!* a dead shot, *por Dios!"* exclaimed Don Emilio. "That will teach the heathen Indians to keep their distance; they will not be over-anxious to meet these two Christians at close quarters!"

We were not molested on this day nor on the next, but on the day thereafter we were in terrible danger. The Indians fired the dry grass, and if the wind had been stronger we must have been burned to death. As it was we were nearly suffocated from traveling in a dense

smoke for several hours. Then, fortunately, we reached the bottom lands of the Arkansas River and were safe from fire, as the valley was very wide and covered with tall green grass which could not burn; and no sooner was the last wagon on safe ground than the fire gained the rim of the green bottomland. Our oxen were exhausted and in a bad plight, so we fortified and camped here for several days to recuperate before we forded the river. This took up several days, as the water was quite high and the river bottom a dangerous quicksand. To stop the wheels of a wagon for one moment meant the loss of the wagon and the lives of the cattle, perhaps. The treacherous sands would have engulfed them. Forty yoke of oxen were hitched to every vehicle, and we had no losses. On the other side we found the prairie burned over, and we traveled all day until evening in order to reach a suitable camping place with sufficient grass for our animals. As there was no water and the cattle were suffering, we were compelled to drive our herd back to the river and return again that same night. The rising sun found us under way again, and by noon we came to good camping ground with an abundance of grass and water.

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERY OF THE SMOKING RUIN. STALKING A WARRIOR. THE AMBUSH

Now we were past the most dangerous part of our journey, leaving the Comanche country and entering the domain of the Ute Indians and other tribes, who were not as brave as the Arapahoes and Comanches. Here our caravan-formation was broken up and each outfit traveled separately at its own risk.

The next day we witnessed a most horrible and distressing sight. Willingly would I surrender several years of my allotted lifetime on earth if I could thereby efface forever the awful impression of this pitiful tragedy from my memory. Alas! that I was fated to behold the shocking sight! For days thereafter we plodded on, a sad-looking, sober, downhearted lot of men, grieved to distraction, and there I left the innocence of boyhood—wiser surely, but not better! We neared the still smoking ruins of what had once been a happy home. As I approached to gratify my curiosity, I met several of my companions, who were returning and who implored

me not to go nearer. An old Mexican, ignorant, rough, and callous as he was, begged me, with tears streaming down his face, to retrace my steps. Alas, when would impulsive youth ever listen to wise counsel and take heed! I entered the ruins and saw a dark telltale pool oozing forth from under the door of a cellar. Oh, had I but then overcome my morbid curiosity and fled! But no! I must needs open the door and look in. I saw—I saw a beautiful whiskey barrel, its belly bursted and its head stove in!

The trip across the plains was a very healthful and pleasant experience to me. During the greatest heat and while the moon favored us, we often traveled at night and rested in daytime. By foregoing my rest, I found opportunity to hunt antelope and smaller game. I was very fond of this sport and indulged in it frequently. One day I sighted a band of antelope—the most beautiful and graceful animals. I tried to head them off, in order to get within rifle-shot distance, and drifted farther and farther away from camp until I must have strayed at least five miles. Like a rebounding rubber ball, their four feet striking the ground simultaneously, they fled until at last they faded from sight on the horizon, engulfed in a shimmering wave of

heat, the reflection from a sun-scorched ground. Reluctantly I gave up the chase, as I could by no means approach the game, although they could not have winded me.

In order to determine the direction of our camp, I ascended a little hill, when I suddenly espied an Indian. He was in a sitting posture, less than a quarter of a mile away. Apparently he was stark naked and his face was turned away from me, for I saw his broad back where not covered by his long hair glisten in the hot rays of the sun. His gun was lying within reach of his right hand, but I could not see what he was doing. On the impulse of the moment I dropped behind a flowering cactus for concealment. Then I took counsel with myself and decided that it would be too risky to return to camp as I had intended to do. In that direction for a long distance the ground was gently rising and most likely the Indain would have seen me. I thought it probable that he had staked his horse out in some nearby gulch, and if seen I would have been at his mercy, as perhaps he was also in touch with other Indians of his tribe. I reasoned that I could not afford to make the mistake of incurring the risk to stake my life on the chance of escaping his observation. I had

started out to hunt antelopes, but now I coolly prepared myself to stalk an Indian warrior instead. I went about it as if I were hunting a coyote. First of all, I ascertained the direction of the wind, which was very light. It blew from the quarter the Indian was in toward me. Next, lying on my stomach, I dug the large flowering plant up, and holding it by its roots in front of myself, I crawled toward my quarry, as a snake in the grass. Cautiously, stealthily, avoiding the slightest noise, and always on the lookout for snakes and thorns, I crept slowly on, making frequent halts to rest myself. Twice the Indian turned his head and looked in my direction, but apparently he did not perceive me. In this manner I came within easy gunshot distance. Now I took my last rest, and with my knife dug a hole in the ground and replanted my cactus shield firmly. Then I placed my rifle in position to fire and drew a fine bead on the nape of his neck.

"*Adios* (Indian brave), prepare thy soul to meet the great Spirit in the ever grassy meadows of the happy hunting grounds of eternity, for the spider of thy fate is weaving the last thread in the web of thy doom!" My finger was coaxing the trigger, when a feeling of intense shame

rose fiercely in my breast. Was I, then, like unto this Indian, to take an enemy's life from ambush? Up I jumped with a challenging shout, my gun leveled, ready for the fight. *"Por Dios, amigo, amigo!"* cried the frightened Indian, holding up his hands. *"No tengo dinero!"* (I have no money. Don't shoot!) he begged, speaking to me in Spanish. Then I went to him and learned that he belonged to a wagon train, traveling just ahead of us. He was a full-blood Navajo, who had been made captive in a Mexican raid into the Navajo country. The Mexicans used to capture many Navajo pappooses and bring them up as bond servants or peons. This Indian told me that he had been following the same band of antelopes as myself, and on passing a beautiful hill of red ants, he yielded to temptation and thought he would have his clothes examined and laundered by the ants. These little insects are really very accommodating and work without remuneration. At the same time he likewise took a sun bath on the same liberal terms. This episode made me famous with every Spanish freighter over the Santa Fé trail, from Kansas into New Mexico.

Just before we reached the Cimarron country, which is very hilly and is drained by the Red

River, and where we were out of all danger from Indians, I had a narrow escape from death. I was in the lead of our train and had crossed a muddy place in the road. I drove on without noticing that I was leaving the other teams far behind. A wagon stuck fast in the mire, which caused my companions a great deal of labor and much delay. At last I halted to await the coming of the other teams. Suddenly there fell a shot from the dense growth of a wild sunflower copse. It missed my head by a very close margin and just grazed the ear of one of the mules. I believe that if I had attempted to rejoin the train then I would have been killed from ambush. Instead, I quickly secured the brake of my wagon, then I unhooked the trace chains of the mules and quieted them and lay down under the wagon, ready to defend myself. I was, however, not further molested and my companions came along after a while. They had heard the shot and thought it was I who had fired it.

CHAPTER IV

A STRANGE LAND AND STRANGER PEOPLE

We were now within the boundaries of the Territory of Colorado and approaching the northern line of New Mexico. When we passed through Trinidad, which was then a small adobe town, we met Don Emilio Cortez again. He was at home in this vicinity and came for the express purpose of persuading me to come with him. "My good wife charged me to bring her that little gringa," he said; "she longs for an American son." "Our daughter, Marquita, is now ten years of age and has been asked in marriage by Don Roberto Pesado, a very rich man. But the child is afraid of him, as he is a mountain of flesh, weighing close on twelve arrobas. Now we thought that two years hence thou wilt be seventeen years old and a man very sufficient for our little Marquita, who will then, with God's favor, be a woman of twelve years. She will have a large dowry of cattle and sheep, and as the saints have blessed us with an abundance of land and chattels, thou art not required to provide."

I thanked Don Emilio very kindly, but was, of course, too young then to entertain any thought of marrying. I was really sorry to disappoint him, as he seemed to have formed a genuine attachment for me and was seriously grieved by my refusal.

Rumor spreads its vagaries faster among illiterate people than among the enlightened and educated. Therefore, it was said in New Mexico long before our arrival there that Don José Lopez's outfit brought a young American, the like of whom had never been known before. He was not ignorant, as other Americans, for he not only spoke the Spanish, but he could also read and write the Castilian language. It was well known that most Americans were so stupid that they could not talk as well as a Mexican baby of two years, and that often after years of residence among Spanish people they were still ignorant of the language. And would you believe it, but it was the sacred truth, this little American, albeit a mere boy, had the strength of a man. He made that big heathen Navajo brute Pancho, the mayordomo of Don Preciliano Chavez, of Las Vegas, stand stark before him in his nakedness, with his hands raised to Heaven and compelled him, under pain of in-

stant death, to say his Pater Noster and three Ave Marias. Others said that Don José Lopez was a man of foresight and discretion and saw that the Indians were on the warpath and very dangerous. Therefore, he prayed to his patron saint for spiritual guidance and succor. San Miguel, in his wisdom, sent this young American heretic, as undoubtedly it was best to fight evil with evil. And when the devil, in the guise of a coyote, led the Indians to the attack, then he was sorely wounded by the unerring aim of the gringito's rifle.

Others said that Don José Lopez had set up a shrine for the image of his renowned patron saint, San Miguel, in his provision wagon, which was being driven by the American boy, and the boy took the bullet which wounded the coyote so sorely out of the saint's mouth, who had bitten the sign of the cross thereon. And the evil one, in the likeness of the coyote, rolled in his agony on the grass when he was hit by the cross-marked bullet. Of course, the grass took fire and very nearly burned up the whole caravan.

Other people said they were not surprised to hear of miracles emanating from the shrine of the patron saint of Don José. His grandfather had whittled this famous image out of a

cottonwood tree, whereon a saintly *Penitente* had been crucified after the custom of the order of Flagellants. This *Penitente* resembled the penitent thief who died on the cross and entered Paradise with the Saviour in this, that he was known to be a good horse thief, and as he had died on the cross on a night of Good Friday, he surely went to Glory Everlasting. Don José's grandfather made a pilgrimage with this image he had made to the City of Mexico, to have the Archbishop bless it in the cathedral before Santa Guadalupe. During the ceremony, it was said, there grew a fine head of flaxen hair on the image and it received beautiful blue eyes. And it had the miraculous propensity to ever after wink its eye in the presence of a priest and at the approach of a Christ-hating Jew, it would spit. This virute saved much wealth for the family of Don José, as they were ever put on their guard against Jewish peddlers.

The rumor that Don José Lopez had carried the household saint with him in his wagon was at once contradicted and disproved by his wife, Doña Mercedes. The lady declared that San Miguel had never left his shrine in the patio of their residence except for the avowed

purpose of making rain. In seasons of protracted drouth, when crops and live stock suffer for want of water, crowds of Mexican people, mostly farmers' wives and their children, form processions and carry the images of saints round about the parched fields, chanting hymns and praying for rain.

On this occasion Doña Mercedes availed herself of the chance to extol the prowess and power of her family's idolized saint, San Miguel. She said as a rainmaker he had no equal. He disliked and objected to have himself carried about the fields when there was not a certain sign of coming rain in the heavens. Her little saint, she said, was too honorable and too proud to risk the disgrace of failure and bring shame on her family. Therefore, he would not consent to be carried out in the fields until kind Nature, through unfailing signs, proclaimed a speedy downpour. When thunder shook the expectant earth and the first drops of rain began to fall, then he started on his little business trip and never had he failed to make it rain copiously. Friends of Don José Lopez, hearing all this talk, were not slow to take advantage of it. The time for the election of county officials was near and they promptly placed Don José in

nomination for the office of the sheriff of San Miguel County.

When people applied to the parish priest for advice in this matter, he laughingly told them that he did not know if all these current rumors were true, *quien sabe,* but surely nothing was impossible before the Lord and the blessed saints, and Don José being a friend, he advised them to give him their support, as he was a very good and capable man who would make an ideal sheriff. To be sure, the Don paid his debts and was never remiss in his duties to Holy Church.

We crossed over the Raton Mountains and were then in the northern part of the Territory of New Mexico. What a curious country it was! The houses were built of adobe or sun-dried brick of earth, in a very primitive fashion. We seemed to be transported as by magic to the Holy Land as it was in the lifetime of our Saviour. The architecture of the buildings, the habits and raiment of the people, the stony soil of the hills, covered by a thorny and sparse vegetation, the irrigated fertile land of the valleys, the small fields surrounded by adobe walls—all this could not fail to remind one vividly of descriptions and pictures of Old

Egypt and Palestine. Here you saw the same dusty, primitive roads and quaint bullock carts, that were hewn out of soft wood and joined together with thongs of rawhide and built without the vestige of iron or other metal. There were the same antediluvian plows, made of two sticks, as used in ancient Egypt at the time of the Exodus, when Moses led the Jews out of captivity to their Promised Land. The very atmosphere, so dry and exhilarating, seemed strange. In this transparent air, objects which were twenty miles distant seemed to be no farther than two or three miles at most. In such a country it would not have surprised any one to meet the Saviour face to face, riding an ass or burro over the stony road, followed by His disciples and a multitude of people, who, with the most implicit faith in the Lord's power to perform miracles, expected Him to provide them with an abundance of loaves and fishes. Here we were in a country, a territory of the United States, which was about eighteen hundred years behind the civilization of other Christian countries.

As we passed through the many little hamlets and towns, the male population, who were sitting on the shady side of their houses, regarded

us with lazy curiosity. They were leaning against the cool, adobe walls, dreaming and smoking cigarettes. The ladies seemed to possess a livelier disposition and emerged from their houses to gossip and gather news. They viewed me with the greatest interest and curiosity and, shifting the mantillas, or *rebozos,* behind which they hid their faces after the Moorish fashion, they gazed at me with shining eyes. And I believe that I found favor with many, for they would exclaim,*"Mira que Americanito tan lindo, tan blanco!"* (What a handsome young American. See what beautiful blue eyes he has and what a white complexion.) And mothers warned the maidens not to look at me, as I might have the evil eye. I heard one lady tell her daughter, "You may look at him just once, Dolores; oh, see how handsome he is!" (*Valga me, Dios, que lindo es, pobrecito!*) And the way the young lady gazed was a revelation to me. The fire of her limpid black eyes struck me as a ray of glorious light. An indescribable thrill, never before known, rose in my breast and she held me enthralled under a spell which I had not the least desire to break. And they said that it was I who had the evil eye! To say that these people were lacking in the virtues and ac-

complishments of modern civilization entirely would be a mistake very easily made indeed by strangers who, on passing through their land, did not understand their language and were unfamiliar with their social customs and mode of living. They extended unlimited hospitality to every one alike, to friend or stranger, to poor or rich. They were most charmingly polite in their conversation, personal demeanor, and social intercourse and very charitable and affectionate to their families and neighbors. These people are happy as compared with other nations in that they do not worry and fret over the unattainable and doubtful, but lightheartedly they enjoy the blessings of the present, such as they are. Therefore, if rightly understood, they may be the best of companions at times, being sincere and unselfish; so I have found many of them to be later on, during the intercourse of a more intimate acquaintance. In the large towns, as Santa Fé, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas, where there lived a considerable number of Americans, these would naturally associate together, as, for instance, the American colony in Paris or Berlin or other foreign places, so as not to be obliged to mingle with the natives socially any more than they chose. But in the village where my rela-

tives lived, we had not the alternative of choosing our own countrymen for social companionship.

Therefore, I realized when I reached my destination that I had to change my accustomed mode of living and adapt myself to such a life as people had led eighteen hundred years ago. I thought that if I took the example of the Saviour's life for my guiding star, I would certainly get along very well. Undoubtedly this would have sufficed in a spiritual sense, but I found that it would be impractical as applied to my temporal welfare and the requirements of the present time. For I could not perform miracles nor could I live as the Saviour had done, roaming over the country and teaching the natives. And then, seeing that there were so many Jews in New Mexico, I feared they might attempt to crucify me and I did not relish the thought. Therefore I accepted King Solomon's life as the next best one to emulate. While I was greatly handicapped by not possessing the riches of the great old king, I fancied that I had a plenty of his wisdom, and although I could not cut as wide a swath as he had done, I did well enough under the circumstances. I was, of course, limited to a vastly smaller scale in the

pursuit and enjoyment of the many good things to be had in New Mexico. Ever joyous, free from care, I drifted in my voyage of life with the stream of hope over the shining waters of a happy and delightful youth.

CHAPTER V

ON THE RIO GRANDE. AN ABSTRACT OF THE AUTHOR'S GENEALOGY OF MATERNAL LINEAGE

In the month of September I came to the end of my journey, as I arrived on the *Rio Abajo.* Now I began the second chapter of my life's voyage. No longer a precocious child, I was growing to young manhood and was not lacking in those qualities which are essential in the successful performance of life's continual struggle. I was heartily welcomed by my uncle, my mother's brother. My aunt, poor lady, had, of course, given me up as lost and greeted me with joyful admiration. But she did not venture close to me, for in me she saw a strong, lusty young man, bright eyed, alert-looking and carrying a deadly army revolver and wicked hunting knife at his belt. To be sure, I was suntanned and graybacked beyond comparison with the dust of a thousand miles of wagon road.

As I had expected, I found my uncle in very prosperous circumstances, in a commercial sense. And no wonder, for he was a tall, fine-looking man, under forty and overflowing with energy

and personal magnetism. And my mother's little family tree did the rest—aye, surely, it was not to be sneezed at, as will be presently seen.

Of course, mother traced her ancestral lineage, as all other people do, to Adam and Eve in general, but in particular she claimed descent from those ancient heroes of the Northland, the Vikings. These daring rovers of the seas were really a right jolly set of men. In their small galleys they roamed the trackless seas, undaunted alike by the terrors of the hurricane as by the perils of unknown shores. On whatever coast they chanced—finding it inhabited, they landed, fought off the men and captured their women. They sacked villages and plundered towns, and loading their ships with booty, they set sail joyfully, homeward bound for the shores of the misty North Sea, the shallow German Ocean. Here they had a number of retreats and strongholds. There was Helgoland, the mysterious island; Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the river Elbe; Buxtehude, notoriously known from a very peculiar ferocious breed of dogs; Norse Loch on the coast of Holstein, and numerous other locker, or inlets, hard to find, harder to enter when found and hardest to pronounce. In the course of time these rovers were visited

by saintly Christian missionaries and, like all other Saxon tribes, they accepted the light of the Christian Gospel. They saw the error of their way and eschewed their vocation of piracy and devoted their energies to commerce and the spreading of the Gospel of Christ.

Piously they decorated the sails of their crafts and blazoned their war shields with the sign of the cross. They kidnapped holy priests (for otherwise they came not), and taking them aboard their ships, they sailed to their several ports. Then they forced the unwilling Fathers to unite them in holy wedlock to the maidens of their choice. To many havens they sailed, and in every one they had an only wife. They made their priests inscribe texts from the holy Gospel on pieces of parchment made from the skin of hogs, and instead of robbing people, as of yore, they paid with the word of Holy Scripture for the booty they levied. This, they said, was infinitely more precious than any worldly dross. All hail to the memory of my gallant maternal ancestor, who, when surfeited with the caresses of his Fifine of Normandy, flew to the arms of Mercedes of Andalusia. Next, perhaps, he appeared in Greenland, blubbering with an Esquimau heiress. Anon, you might have found

him in Columbia in the toils of a princely Pocahontas. In Mexico he ate the ardent chile from the tender hand of his Guadalupita, and later on he was on time at a five o'clock family tea party in Japan, or he might have kotowed pidgin-love to a trusting maid in a China town of fair Cathay. In Africa—oh, horror!—here I draw the veil, for in my mind's eye I behold a burly negro (yes, sah!) staring at me out of fishy, blue eyes. It is said of these gallant rovers of the seas that they were subject to a peculiar malady when on shore. It caused them to stagger and swagger, use violent language, and deport themselves not unlike people who are seized with *mal de mer,* or sickness of the sea. When attacked by this failing, their wives would cast them bodily into the holds of their ships and start them out to sea, where they soon recovered their usual health and equilibrium and continued on their rounds. They were the first of all commercial travelers and the hardiest, jolliest and most prosperous—but they did not hoard their earnings.

My uncle conducted a store, selling merchandise of every description. Dutch uncle though he was to me, I must give him thanks for the careful business training he bestowed on me. I

say with pride that I proved to be his most apt and willing pupil. He taught me how the natives, by nature simple-minded and unsophisticated, had lost all confidence in their fellow-men in general and merchants in particular through the, to say the least, very dubious and suspicious dealings of the tribes of Israel. My uncle said he was an old timer in New Mexico, but the Jew was there already when he came and, added he, thoughtfully, "I believe the Jews came to America with Columbus." With a pack of merchandise strapped to his back, this king of commerce crossed the plains in the face of murderous Indians and with the unexplainable, crafty cunning of his race, he sold tobacco and trinkets to the warriors who had set out to kill him, and to the squaws he sold Parisian lingerie at a bargain. He swore that he was losing money and selling the goods below cost, not counting the freight.

As the Indians had no money and nothing else of commercial value to him, he bartered for the trophies of victory which the proud chiefs carried suspended from their belts. Deprecatingly he called their attention to the undeniable fact that these articles had been worn before and had to be rated as second-hand goods. But

he hoped that his brother-in-law, Isaac Dreibein, who conducted a second-hand hairdressing establishment in New York City, would take these goods off his hands. This trade flourished for a time, until, as usual, Israel fell off from the Lord, by opening shop on the Sabbath. An unlucky Moses got into a fatal altercation with a Comanche chief, whom he cheated out of a scalplock, as he was as baldheaded as a hen's egg. Thereat the Indians became suspicious and refused to trade with the Jews ever after.

With proverbial German thoroughness, uncle instructed me in all the tricks and secrets of his profession. He had found that the Mexicans were good buyers, if handled scientifically, for they would never leave the store until they had spent all their money. Therefore, in order to encourage our customers, we kept a barrel of firewater under the counter as a trade starter. One or more drams of old Magnolia would start the ball to roll finely. Our merchandise cost mark was made up from the words, "God help us!" Every letter of this pious sentiment designated one of the numbers from one to nine and a cross stood for naught. When I said to uncle, "No wonder that our business prospers under this mark—God help us!—but say, who helps

our customers?" he was nonplussed for a moment, and then he laughed heartily and said that this had never worried him yet.

There was not much money in circulation in New Mexico at that time, as the country was without railroads and too isolated to market farm produce, wool and hides profitably. Mining for gold was carried on at Pinos Altos, near the southern boundary, but the Apaches did not encourage prospecting to any extent. During the period of the discovery of gold in California, in the days of "forty-nine," the people of New Mexico had become quite wealthy through supplying the California placer miners with mutton sheep at the price of an ounce of gold dust per head, when muttons cost half a dollar on the Rio Grande. At that rate of profit they could afford the time and expense of driving their herds of sheep to market at Los Angeles, even though the Apaches of Arizona took their toll and fattened on stolen mutton.

CHAPTER VI

INDIAN LORE. THE WILY NAVAJO

THE principal source of the money supply was the United States Government, which maintained many forts and army posts in the Territories as a safeguard against the Apache and Navajo Indians. During the Civil War, the Navajo Indians broke out and raided the Mexican settlements along the Rio Grande and committed many outrages and thefts. The Government gave these Indians the surprise of their lives. An army detachment of United States California volunteers swooped suddenly down on the Navajos and surprised and conquered them in the strongholds of their own country. The whole tribe was forced to surrender, was disarmed, and transported to Fort Stanton by the Government.

This military reservation lies on the eastern boundary of New Mexico, on the edge of the staked plains of Texas. Here the Navajos were kept in mortal terror of their hereditary enemies, the Comanche Indians, for several years, and they were so thoroughly cowed and subdued

by this stratagem that they were good and peaceable ever after. The Government allowed them to reoccupy their native haunts and granted them a reservation of seventy-five miles square. These Indians are blood relatives to the savage Apaches. They speak the same language, as they are also of Mongolian origin. They came originally from Asia in an unexplained manner and over an unknown route. They have always been the enemies of the Pueblo Indians, who are descendants of the Toltec and Aztec races. Unlike the Pueblo Indians, who live in villages and maintain themselves with agricultural pursuits, the Navajos are nomads and born herdsmen.

The Navajo tribe is quite wealthy now, as they possess many thousands of sheep and goats, and they are famed for their quaint and beautiful blankets and homespun, which they weave on their hand looms from the wool of their sheep. They owned large herds of horses, beautiful ponies, a crossed breed of mustangs and Mormon stock, which latter they had stolen in their raids on the Mormon settlements in Utah. As saddle horses, these ponies are unexcelled for endurance under rough service.

Mentally the Navajo is very wide awake and

capable of shrewd practices, as shown by the following incident, which happened to my personal knowledge.

A tall, gaudily appareled Indian, mounting a beautiful pony, came to town and offered for sale at our store several gold nuggets the size of hazelnuts. He took care to do this publicly, so as to attract the attention of some Mexicans, who became immensely excited at the sight of the gold and began to question him at once in order to ascertain how and whence he had obtained the golden nuggets. They almost fought for the privilege of taking him as an honored guest to their respective homes. The Indian was very non-committal as regarded his gold mine, but very willing to accept the sumptuous hospitality so freely rendered him. He was soon passed on from one disappointed Mexican to another, who in turn fared no better and invariably sped the parting guest to the door of his nearest neighbor. When the Indian had made the circuit of the town in this manner he looked very sleek and happy, indeed, but the people were no wiser. The knowledge of having been shamefully buncoed by an Indian and disappointed in their lust for gold made the Mexicans desperate. They held an indignation meeting

and resolved to capture the wily Navajo and compel him, under torture, if necessary, to divulge the secret of his gold mine. Consequently, they overcame the Indian, and when they threatened him with torture and death, he yielded and said that he had found the gold in the Rio de San Francisco, a mountain stream of Arizona. He promised to guide them to the spot where he obtained the nuggets, saying that the bottom of the stream was literally covered with golden sand, which might be seen from a distance, as it shone resplendently in the sun. Then every able-bodied Mexican in town who possessed a horse prepared to join a prospecting expedition to the wild regions of mysterious Arizona. They organized a company and elected a captain, a man of courage and experience. The captain's first official act was to place a guard of four armed men over the Navajo to prevent his escape, otherwise they treated their prisoner well.

The women of the town cooked and baked for the party, and undoubtedly each lady reveled in the hope to see her own man return with a sackful of gold; and as a result of these fanciful expectations they were in the best of spirits, laughing and singing the livelong day.

At last the party was off, and what happened

to them I shall relate, as told me by the captain, Don José Marie Baca y Artiaga, and in his own words as nearly as I can remember them.

"Valga me, Dios, Señor! What an experience was that trip to Arizona! It began and ended with disappointment and disaster. All the men of our party seemed to have lost their wits from the greed of gold. They began by hurrying. Those who had the best mounts rushed on ahead, carrying the Indian along with them, and strove to leave their companions who were not so well mounted behind. The first night's camp had of necessity to be made at a point on the Rio Puerco, distant about thirty-five miles. As the last men rode into camp, the first comers were already making ready to leave again. In vain I remonstrated and commanded. There was a fight, and not until several men were seriously wounded came they to their senses and obeyed my orders. I threatened to leave them and return home, for I knew very well that unless our party kept together we were sure to be ambushed and attacked. I cautioned my companions as they valued their lives to watch the Navajo and shoot him on the spot at the first sign of treachery. This devil of an Indian led us over terrible trails, across the roughest

and highest peaks and the deepest canyons of a wild, broken country. He seemed to be on the lookout ever for an opportunity to escape, but I did not give him the chance. Our horses suffered and were well-nigh exhausted when we finally sighted the coveted stream from a spur of the Mogollon range which we were then descending. The stream glistened and shone like gold in the distance, under the hot rays of a noonday sun and my companions would have made a dash for the coveted goal if their horses had not been utterly exhausted and footsore. As it was, I had the greatest trouble to calm them. Arriving at the last and steepest declivity of the trail, I succeeded in halting the party long enough to listen to my words. 'Companions,' I said, 'hear me before you rush on! I shall stay here with this Indian, whom you will first tie to this mesquite tree. Now you may go, and may the saints deliver you from your evil passion and folly. Mind you, señores, I claim an equal share with you in whatever gold you may find. If any one objects, let him come forth and say so now, man to man. I shall hold the trail for those among you who would haply choose to return. Forsooth, companions, I like not the actions of this Indian. Beware the

Apache, señores; remember we are in the Tonto's own country!'

"From my position I witnessed the exciting race to the banks of the stream, and saw plainly how eagerly my companions worked with pick and pan. Hard they worked, but not long, for soon they assembled in the shade of a tree, and after a conference I saw them make the usual preparations for camping. Several men looked after the wants of the horses, others built fires, and four of the party returned toward me. 'What luck, Compañeros!' I hailed them when they came within hearing distance. 'Señor Capitan, we have come for the Indian,' said the spokesman of the squad. 'And what use have you for the Indian?' I asked. 'We shall hang him to yonder tree,' they said, 'as a warning to liars and impostors.' *Bueno, Caballeros,* he deserves it. I deliver him into your hands under this condition, that you grant him a fair trial, as becomes men who being good Catholics and sure of the salvation of their souls may not, without just cause, consign a heathen to the everlasting fires of perdition.'

"Silently, stoically, the Indian suffered himself to be led to the place of his execution. After the enraged Mexicans had placed him under

a tree with the noose of a riata around his neck, they informed him that he might now plead in the defense of his life if he had anything to say. 'Mexicans,' said the Navajo, 'I fear not death! If I must die, let it be by a bullet. I call the great Spirit, who knows the hearts of his people, to witness that I beg not for my life. I have not a split tongue nor am I an impostor. I have guided you to the place of gold. I have kept my promise. You Mexicans came with evil hearts. You fought your own brothers. You abandoned your sick companions on the trail to the coyote. You have broken the law of hospitality toward me, your guest, as no Spaniard has ever done before. Therefore, has your God punished you. He has changed the good gold of these waters to shimmering mica and shining dross. Fool gold He gives to fools! As you serve me now, so shall the Apaches do to you. Never more shall you taste of the waters of the Rio Grande, so says the Spirit in my heart!'

"The Indian's dignified bearing and his inspired words on the threshold of eternity moved my conscience and caused a feeling of respect and pity for him in my breast as well as in others of our party. When Juan de Dios Carasco, who was known and despised by all for being a good-

for-nothing thieving coward, drew his gun to shoot the Navajo in the back, I could not control my anger. 'Stop,' I shouted, you miserable hen thief, or you die at my hands, and now. This Indian should die, but not in such a manner. Señores, you have made me your capitan. Now I shall enforce my orders at the risk of my life's blood. Give that Indian a knife and fair play in a combat against the prowess of the valiant Don Juan de Dios Carasco.'

"Although greatly disconcerted, Juan de Dios had to toe the mark. There was no alternative for him now, as I was desperate and my orders were obeyed to the letter, for death was the penalty for disobedience. The fight between the Mexican and the Indian ended by the Navajo, who was sorely wounded, throwing his knife into the heart of his enemy. It was a fair fight, although we accorded Juan de Dios, he being a Christian, this advantage against the Indian (who was better skilled in the use of weapons) that we allowed him to wrap his coat about his left arm as a shield, while the Indian was stripped to his *patarague,* or breechclout. We buried the body and allowed the Indian to shift for himself. I observed him crawling near the water's edge in quest of herbs, which he masti-

cated and applied to his wounds with an outer coating of mud from the banks of the stream. During the following night he disappeared. I suspect that the golden nuggets which caused all our troubles were taken from the body of a prospector who had been murdered in the lonesome mountains of Arizona.

"We allowed our horses several days' rest to recuperate before starting on our return trip. You saw, señor, how we arrived. Starved, sore, and discouraged, we straggled home, jeered at and ridiculed by wiseacres who are always ready to say, 'I told you so!' and by enemies who had no liking for us. But the women, may Santa Barbara keep them virtuous! they who loved their husbands truly rejoiced to welcome us home, although we failed to bring them *chispas de oro.*

"As concerns the wife of Juan de Dios, and who was now his widow, *pobrecita,* she was not to be found at her home. She had taken advantage of her man's absence to decamp to the mountain of Manzana with a strapping goat-herder, a very worthy young man, whom she loved and is now happily free to marry."

CHAPTER VII

THE FIGHT IN THE SAND HILLS. THE PHANTOM DOG

A NUMBER of years had I lived with my relatives when uncle found it expedient to sell out his business. He had prospered wonderfully in his commercial ventures. Long since had his coffers absorbed most of the money circulating within his sphere of trade. Thereafter he accepted commercial paper in payment for merchandise, and trade grew immensely. Our customers soon learned how easy it was to affix their signatures to promissory notes and to mortgages on their lands or cattle, their horses, sheep, crops, and chattels. Of course there was a little interest to be paid on the indebtedness, but as it was merely a trifling one and a half per centum per month or eighteen per cent yearly, it was of no consequence. And it was so easy to pay your debts. Just think of it, people bought everything they needed and longed for at the store and paid for it by simply signing their names to several papers. When the day of payment came, they could liquidate their debts by

renewing their obligations. They simply signed a new set of similar papers with the interest compounded and added to the original debt. Surely Don Guillermo was conceded to stand highest in popular estimation of any set of men who had ever come to the Rio Grande. Had he not shown the people how to do business in a convenient and easy manner? Under such a system nobody worried or labored very much and life was like a pleasant dream. But alas! there has always been a beginning and an ending to everything under the sun, good or evil. The awakening from an easy life's dream was occasioned by a crushing blow. It fell on the day of final reckoning, when Don Guillermo, my good uncle, thought the time was propitious to realize something tangible on sundry duly signed, sealed, and witnessed instruments. There was a rumpus; neither earthquake nor cyclone would have caused a greater commotion in the community. What, then, did this lying gringo mean by resorting to the trickery of the United States law courts and the power and services of the county sheriff? Why did he wrest their property from them? Had this gringo not always accepted their signatures as a legal tender for the payment of their debts? Had he not told them

time and again that their handwriting was better than gold? If uncle had fallen into the clutches of these furious people, he would undoubtedly have been lynched. But he had wisely disposed of all his property in the country and had left with his family for the States. I remained in the service of the buyer of and successor to his business.

Soon after I began to feel lonesome, restless and dissatisfied, and that life among the natives was not as pleasant and satisfactory as formerly may be easily imagined. In fact, the gringos were now cordially hated and envied by a certain class, the element of greatest influence among the people. This produced a feeling of unpleasantness not to be overcome, and I resolved to emigrate to California, overland, by way of Arizona. I longed for the companionship of people of my own race and wanted to see more of the world. There was an opportunity to go to Prescott, a mining town of northern Arizona, with several ox-teams which were freighting provisions. The freighter, Don Juan Mestal, assured me that he was very glad to have the pleasure and comfort of my company and would not listen to an offer of remuneration on my part. He said there was the choice of

two routes; one road passed through the country of the Navajo Indians and the other road led past Zuñi, the isolated Pueblo village. Don Juan said that he would not go by way of Zuñi, if he could avoid it, as he was prejudiced against this tribe. Not that they were hostile or dangerous, but he had acquired a positive aversion, amounting to abhorrence, for those peaceful people when he, as a boy, accompanied his father on a trading expedition there. At that time he witnessed the revolting execution of a score of Navajos who had been apprehended as spies by the Zuñis. These unfortunates came to their village as visiting guests, it being in the time of the harvest of maize, when these Indians celebrate their great Thanksgiving feast. A young Navajo chief, who led the visiting party, aroused the ire of the old medicine chief of the tribe, who had lately added a new attraction to his household, beshrewing himself with another lovely young squaw. It was said that the enamored damsel had made preparations to elope with the gallant Navajo chief, but was betrayed by the telltale barking of the dogs, great numbers of which infest all Indian villages. The old doctor accused the Navajos of espionage and had them taken by surprise and

imprisoned in an underground foul den. Then met the chiefs of the tribe in their *estufa,* or secret meeting place, to pass judgment on the culprits. The old medicine chief smoked himself into a trance in order to receive special instructions from the great Spirit regarding the degree of punishment to be inflicted on the unlucky Navajos. After sleeping several hours, he awoke and announced that he had dreamed the Navajos were to be clubbed to death. After sunrise the next morning these poor Indians met their doom in the public square of the village unflinchingly in the presence of the whole population.

They were placed in a row, facing the sun, about ten feet apart. A Zuñi executioner, armed with a war club, was stationed in front of each victim, and another one, armed likewise, stood behind him. A great war chief raised his arms and yelled, and forty clubs were raised in air. Then the great war drum, or *tombé,* boomed out the knell of death. There was a sickening, crashing thud, and twenty Navajos fell to earth with crushed skulls, each *cabeza* having been whacked simultaneously, right and left, fore and aft, by two stone clubs in the hands of a pair of devils.

It had always been an enigma to me that the Pueblo Indians, who were not to be matched as fighters against the Apache and Navajo and been able to defend their villages against the onslaught of these fierce tribes, their hereditary enemies. Don Juan Mestal enlightened me on that topic. He said the explanation therefor was to be found in a certain religious superstition of the Navajos and Apaches, which circumstance the Pueblo Indians took advantage of and exploited to the saving of their lives. When they had reason to expect an attack on their villages, the Pueblo laid numerous mines and torpedoes on all the approaches and streets of their towns. While these mines did not possess the destructive power of dynamite or gunpowder, they were equally effective and powerful, and never failed to repulse the enemy, especially if reinforced by hand grenades of like ammunition, thrown by squaws and pappooses from the flat roofs of their houses. By some means or other it had become known to the descendants of Montezuma that when an Apache stepped on something out of the ordinary "he scented mischief" and believed himself unclean and befouled with dishonor, and fancied himself disgraced before God and man;

and forthwith he would hie himself away to do penance at the shrine of the nearest water sprite. This superstition they brought from Asia, their native land.

When the day of our departure drew near, I visited my numerous friends to bid them farewell and receive many like wishes in return. I must own that I felt a pang of sadness when I saw tears well up in the innocent eyes of sweet maidens and saw the fires dimmed in the black orbs of lovely matrons whom I had held often in my arms to the measure and tuneful melody of the fantastic wild fandango; this musical Andalusian strain which words cannot describe —soul-stirring, enchanting, promising and denying, plaintive or jubilant, a song from Heaven or a wail from the depths of Hades. Here I lived the happiest hours of my life, but being young, I did not realize it then.

When I came to the house of Don Reyes Alvarado, who was my chum and bosom friend, and also of like age, he gave me a pleasant surprise. He informed me that there would be a dance at the Hancho Indian's settlement that same night, one of those ceremonial events which I had long desired to attend in order to study the customs and habits of these descend-

ants of the Aztecs. Their social dances are inspired by ancient customs and are the outbursts of the dormant, barbaric rites of a religion which these people were forced to abandon by their conquering masters, the Spaniards. Outwardly and visibly Christians, taught to observe the customs of the Roman Catholic Church and to conform to its ritual, these people, who were the scum and overflow from villages of Pueblo Indians, were yet Aztec heathens in the consciousness of their souls and in the inclination of their hearts.

Shortly after sunset we were on our way to the sand dunes of the Rio Grande, where these poor outcasts had squatted and built their humble homes of *terron,* or sod, which they cut from the alkali-laden soil of the vega. They held their dance orgies in the *estufa,* the meeting house of the tribe. This was a long, low structure built of adobe, probably a hundred feet long and nine feet wide, inside measure. The building was so low that I could easily lay the palm of my uplifted hand against the ceiling of the roof, which was made of beams of cottonwood, covered with sticks off which the bark had been carefully peeled, the whole had then been covered with clay a foot in depth. The floor of

this long, low tunnel-like room was made of mud which had been skilfully tampered with an admixture of short cut straw and had been beaten into the proper degree of hardness. Dampened at intervals, this floor was quite serviceable to dance on. There were no windows or ventilators in this hall and only one door at the end. This was made out of a slab of hewn wood and was just high and wide enough to admit a good sized dog. The hall was brilliantly lighted by a dozen mutton tallow dips, which were distributed about the room in candelabra of tin, hanging on the mud-plastered and whitewashed walls. The orchestra consisted of one piece only, an ancient war drum, or *tombé,* and was located at the farther end of the room. It was beaten by an Indian, who was, if possible, more ancient than the drum. As we approached we heard the muffled sound of the drum within. *"Caramba, amigo!"* said my friend; "they are at it already, and judging from the sound, they are very gay to-night. *Madre santissima!* I remember that this is a great night for these Indians, as it is the anniversary of the *Noche Triste,* which they celebrate in commemoration of the Aztec's victory over the Spaniards when the Indians almost wiped their enemies

off the face of the earth. Señor, to tell the truth, rather would I turn my horse's head homeward. Pray, let us return!" "And why, *amigo,*" I asked. "Because this has always been a day of ill luck for our family," said Don Reyes. "It began with the misfortune of the famed Knight Don Pedro Alvarado, the bravest of men and the right hand of Don Fernando Cortez. In the bloody retreat of the Spaniards from Mexico, in their fight with the Aztecs, during the *Noche Triste,* Don Pedro Alvarado, from whom we were descended, lost his mare through a deadly arrow. *"Muy bien, amigo Don Reyes,"* said I; "if you fear these people, I advise you to return home to Doña Josefita, but I shall go on alone." "I fear not man or beast!" flared up Don Reyes, "as you well know, friend, but these are heathen fiends, not human, who worship a huge rattlesnake, which they keep in an underground den and feed with the innocent blood of Christian babes. Lead on, señor, I shall follow. I see it is as Doña Josefita, my little wife, says: "If these young gringos crave a thing, there is no use in denying them, for they seem to compel! To the very door of that uncanny place I follow you, *amigo,* but enter therein I shall not, unless I be first

absolved from my sins and shriven by the *padre.*"

We had now arrived at the door of the *estufa* (oven), where the entertainment was going on, full blast. I alighted and my friend took charge of my horse and stationed himself at the door while I got down on all fours and crawled inside. I seated myself on a little bench at one side of the entrance. When my eyes got accustomed to the dense atmosphere of the place, I observed that the room was full of people, dancing in couples with a peculiar slow-waltz step. The ladies stayed in their places while the men made the rounds of the hall. After a few turns with a lady, they shuffled along to the next one, continually exchanging their partners. As the dancers passed me by, one after another, they noticed me, and many among them scowled and looked angry and displeased. Suddenly the drum stopped for a few minutes. Then it began in a faster tempo. Now the men remained stationary, while the ladies made the circuit of the room and each one in her turn passed in front of me. They looked lovely in their costumes of finely embroidered snow-white single garments, trimmed with many silver ornaments and trinkets and in their short calico skirts and

beautiful moccasins. Their limbs were tastefully swathed in white buckskin leggins, which completed the costume.

Faster and faster beat the drum, and the sobbing, rhythmic sound thrilled my senses and filled my heart with an indescribable weird, fierce longing. I saw a maiden approaching taller and finer than the rest. One glance of her soft, wild eyes and I flew to her arms. "Back, Indians!" I shouted, "honor your queen!" and entered the lists of the frolicsome dance. Wilder beat the drum and faster. As the old Indian warmed to his work, he broke out in a doleful, monotonous song, the words of which I did not understand. It sounded to me like this:

Anna-Hannah—
Anna-Hannah—
May-Ah!—
Anna-Hannah-Sarah-Wah!
Moolow-Hoolow,
Ji-Hi-Tlack!
Anna-Hannah—
May-Ah-Ha!

So it went on indefinitely.

To lay this troubled spirit I tossed him a handful of coins, with the unfortunate result

that his guttural song became, if anything, more loud and boisterous. I had no thought of exchanging my partner, as the Aztec maiden clung to me. With closed eyes and parted lips she moved as in a blissful dream. I have known Christian people become frantic under the impetus of great religious excitement and I have seen them act very strangely, also have I seen Indians similarly affected during their medicine-ghost dances. Now I, who had not thought it possible of myself, had become more savage and uncontrollable than any one. I suppose it was the irritating, monotonous sound of the war drum that did it, jarring my nerves, and the peculiar Indian odor in the stifling hot air of the close room, enhanced by the exhilarating sensation of threatening danger, and that in the presence of the adored sex. Assuredly all this was more than enough to set me off, as I am naturally impulsive and of a high-strung nervous temperament.

I must say that considering the modest costumes of these Indian ladies and their bashful and shrinking disposition, it does seem strange that they should fascinate one like myself of the Saxon race. To be sure the sight of the bared shoulders and necks of society belles

when undressed in the decolleté fashion of their ball gowns ravishes and gluts our sensuality, but a momentary glimpse of the Indian maid's brown knee flashing by during the excitement of the fandango is just as suggestive, and the inch of hand-made embroidery on the edge of their short skirts is as effective as priceless lace on gowns of Worth. And the Indian fashion has this to recommend it, that it is the less expensive of the two costumes. Ever watchful, ever on the alert, I saw the sheen of a knife flash from its scabbard in the hazy air, and my beautiful partner shivered and moaned in my arms. "Dog of an Indian, dare and die," shouted I, angrily. Four times I made the circuit of the room, and when again opposite the entrance of this man-kennel, I heard the voice of my faithful friend, Don Reyes Alvarado, calling me anxiously. I gave my lovely partner in charge of her tender-hearted sisters, for the poor wild thing had fainted and lay limply in my arms. The strong arm of my companion grasped me and drew me out into the fresh air, where I almost collapsed, overcome.

"Surely, *amigo*," said Reyes, "you will not blame me now for not entering, but you have endurance, *por Dios!* I should not have sur-

vived so long. Thank God you came out alive! When I saw them pass in knives, I had my doubts and momentarily expected to hear the report of your revolver. But when I saw you pass by infatuated with Jtz-Li-Cama, the cacique's daughter and wife of the murderous scoundrel, El Macho, then I gave you up. Oh, see what is happening now. *Amigo,* you have broken up the dance. So it seemed. The drum was silent now and we heard the voices of men arguing in the Aztec idiom. Of a sudden the lights were extinguished and the crowd came out with a rush, and silently they stole away in the darkness.

"Now, *amigo,*" said Reyes, "let me tell you something, which may haply serve you well. Knowing that an American accomplishes things which a Mexican like myself must let alone, I advise you to try for the hidden treasure of La Gran Quivira. Seeing that you are in the good graces of Jtz-Li-Cama, you might prevail with the cacique to guide you. He is said to be the only living man who knows the secret of the trove in the ruins of the sacred temple of the ancient city. The Indians believe that this treasure, which the Aztecs hid from the Spaniards, is guarded by a terrible phantom dog, the

specter of one of the great dogs of Fernando Cortez which ravened among their Aztec ancestors. They fear the specter of this fabled Perro del Malinche more than anything else on earth, as it is said to harrow their souls in Hades as it ravened their bodies when in the flesh."

After smoking a few cigarritos, my friend proposed to ride home, as there was really nothing else to be done. We rode slowly along, enjoying the beautiful night of this faultless climate, and I shall ever remember this night to my last day. There was a pleasant, refreshing odor in the air, the scent of the wild thyme which grows in these sand dunes. The moon rose over the Manzana range and flooded the broad valley with its soft, silvery rays. Suddenly, at a sharp turn of the trail, we found ourselves surrounded by silent forms arisen from the misty ground. "Don Reyes Alvarado," spoke the voice of the Indian, known as the macho, "I have come for revenge and am now ready to wipe out the insults you heaped on me when you charged me with the theft of your calves. I challenge thee to fight. Alight from thy horse, cowardly Spaniard! To-night of all nights shalt thou feel the Indians' blade between thy ribs." "Fight him, *amigo,*" I said. "I

shall enforce fair play." But my friend Reyes, whom I knew to be a man of both strength and courage, weakened, being cowed with the superstition of the unlucky *Noche Triste.* "To-morrow I shall fight thee, Indian," he answered, "not at nighttime, like a thieving coyote." "If thou wert not astride thy horse and out of my reach, thou wouldst not dare say that to me, thou cuckold dupe of the Americans!" sneered the Indian. This insult to my companion angered me, and I demanded a retraction and an apology therefor from the Indian. When the macho flatly refused and repeated the insult in a more aggravating manner, I replied that I feared not to meet him or any other goatherding Indian and was ready to fight him on the spot.

Saying this, I dismounted and threw my horse's bridle to my friend Reyes to hold. Then the cacique, or Pueblo chief, the father of Jtz-Li-Cama, appeared and demanded our weapons. "I shall not interfere in this fight, señores," said he, "if you surrender your weapons to me, the lawful *alguacil* (officer) of this district." He then took the macho's knife, and I gave him my revolver and stripped for the fray.

I advanced and scratched a circle of about twelve feet diameter in the deep sand with my

foot, then I stepped to the center of this ring and awaited my antagonist. I cautioned my friend Reyes to see to it that no one else overstepped the line. To the lonely sand dunes of the Rio Grande unwittingly I thus introduced the manly sport of the prize ring. But the battle was not fought for lucre or fame, nor according to the London Prize Ring Rules; it was fought in defense of a friend's honor, and the stake was life or death. The Indian made a rush for me, but I avoided him and warded off his blows. I did not touch him till I saw my chance, and then I tapped him under the chin which sent him sprawling. He arose promptly and came for me in a rage, when I felled him with a blow on the head. Again he came, and this time he gave me a stunning blow in the face, which maddened me so, that I took the offensive and laid him low with a terrific hit. I was now thoroughly infuriated and threw all caution to the winds. When he arose once more, I attacked him. He took to his heels and I followed him up. I noticed then that the whole crowd of Indians were running after us, but I had now become reckless and did not mind. Then I stumbled over a root and fell face down in the sand. Before I could arise fully the

macho had turned and thrown himself upon me. I managed to turn over on my back and gripped him by throat and face, so that he was really in my power, and I felt that he was subdued so that I could easily force him under, and, small wonder, for with the terrible grip of my hand had I once crushed a man's fingers in a wrestling match. Now I used the macho's body as a shield against the furious onslaught of his people, who attacked me with rocks, clubs, and anything they could lay hands to. I thought, and I never ceased thinking and planning for one moment, that the affair looked very serious for me, when I saw the cacique approach with my pistol in hand, exclaiming, "Now, gringo, thou shalt die, on the altar of the god, at the sacred shrine of Aztlan, I shall lay thy quivering heart!" In vain I looked for help from my companion, who had sought safety in flight. Something had to be done and that quickly. Surely I had one trusty friend, true as steel, who would not forsake me in the extremity of my peril. I bethought me of my little "American bulldog" which I had picked up in the cars in Kansas, and which had ever since followed me faithfully. *"Sic-semper-Cerberus-Sic!"* My right hand stole to my hip, a short sharp bark,

and the treacherous cacique fell over with a crimson stain on his forehead. At the same moment a weird, uncanny yelp pierced the night, and a tremendous shaggy phantom cloud obscured the slender sickle of the moon. Terrified, the Indians screamed *"El Perro! El Perro del Malinche!"* and shrilly the voices of frightened squaws took up the refrain, *"Perro! Perro! Gringo Perro!"*

When I staggered to my feet, I was alone, sorely bruised and wounded, but master of the field. I recovered my revolver, which lay at my feet and contrived to mount my horse, whose bridle had caught on the greasewood brush, and I headed for home.

Not long thereafter I met my friend Reyes, who was followed by a retinue of peons. "*Gracias a Dios. Amigo!*" he exclaimed, on seeing me. "I came after your body, if it were to be found, and here you are alive. When I heard the report of firearms and knowing that those devils had your weapon, I feared the worst. How on earth did you manage to escape them? Seeing you down and beset by the whole tribe, I gave you up for dead and fled."

I told my friend that with God's help and the phantom dog's assistance I had beaten off my

assailants, and I thought that the cacique had been sorely bitten by the dog. Doña Josefita was very anxious and excited. When she saw me coming, she cried, "The saints preserve us, oh here he is! Mercy, how he looks, *pobrecito!* he is cut all to pieces. Hurry, Reyes, bring him in here and lay him gently down. *Hombre,* husband, coward! how couldst thou abandon thy friend who fought for thy honor, not fearing the death. I wager that pale hussy, Jtz-Li-Cama, was, as usual, the cause of this strife between men!"

The kind lady then attended deftly and skillfully to the dressing of my wounds, applying soothing herbs and healing ointments, which tended to allay the fever, and she nursed me with the tenderest care, so that in a week's time I was as well as ever, though not without a feeling of regret for my too speedy recovery.

Of course, there arose the rumor of a fierce battle between Americans and Indians. To silence this silly talk and to avoid unpleasant complications, I surrendered myself to the alcalde of the precinct and accused myself of having disturbed the peace of the realm. Pleading my case, I stated that as there was nobody but the peace disturbers involved, and as said parties

did not make any further claim upon the Honorable Court, therefore, under the statute of the Territory and the Constitution of the United States, the law required that the court mulct the guilty parties in the payment of a nominal fine and discharge the culprits. The Honorable Court decreed that I as an American ought to know the American law best, and discharged me after I paid my self-imposed fine. The administering of justice in cases of importance was, of course, relegated to the United States Circuit Courts, but Uncle Sam did not care to meddle with the many troublesome alcaldes or justices of the peace, as he did not understand the Spanish language very well. This was certainly humiliating and embarrassing, but who can blame him, as no one is over anxious to be rated an ignorant person.

My Mexican friends decided to give a farewell party in my honor. Accordingly they made great preparations. They secured the largest *sala,* or hall, in the township and scoured the country for musicians—fiddlers and guitar players. Every person of any social notability was invited. They drew the line of social respectability at peons, or bondmen. This was a happy-go-lucky caste of people who possessed no prop-

erty nor anything else, and consequently they had no cares and were under no responsibility of any kind, as the wealthier classes, who virtually owned them, had to provide for their necessities. The system of peonage in New Mexico had been abolished with the abolition of slavery in the United States, but the peons did not realize the wretchedness of their deplorable social status, and in their ignorance they regarded their bondage as a privilege, believing themselves fortunate to have their wants provided for by their *patrones*. They were treated kindly by their masters and looked upon as poor relations and intimate but humble friends.

The entertainment was to be of the *velorio* (wake) type, which begins as a prayer meeting and ends in a dance. My friends exerted themselves to the utmost to make this event the social climax of the season. They sent a committee to the pueblo of Isleta for several goatskins full of native wine, and incidentally they borrowed San Augustin, the pueblo's famous image saint, who they intended should preside over the *velorio*. As this prayer meeting was to be in my honor and for the sake of invoking the protection of the saints on my journey, they thought it best to procure San Augustin, who being the

patron saint of the heathen Isleta Indians, would not mind giving a heretic Protestant gringo a good send-off, as he was accustomed to deal with heresy. They also procured a dozen fat mutton sheep, which were to be barbecued and served with chile pelado to the invited guests, surely a tempting menu and hot! The ladies baked bollos, tamales and frijoles. Melons and cantaloupes were brought in by the cartload. I was waited upon by a committee and received a formal invitation; for everything was done in grand Spanish style. When I arrived at the festive hall the ceremonies began. The ladies knelt before San Augustin, praying and chanting alternately. I took my customary station at the door, as master of the artillery. At the singing of a certain stanza and after the words, *"Angel es, y Seraphim es! Santo! Santo! Santo!"* I received my cue from one of the deacons who gave the order: *"Fuego, maestro!"* and I discharged my double barreled shotgun and a brace of six shooters in lightning-like succession. Surely this was pious devotion, properly emphasized, and it kept San Augustin from falling asleep. I used up a pound of gunpowder that night, and this was said to have been the grandest, most successful *velorio* ever held in that part

of the world. At eleven o'clock I announced that my battery was overheated and too dangerous to reload, which stopped the praying and the grand *baile* began. There were several hundred dancing couples, who enjoyed themselves to the utmost until sunrise, and nobody thought of leaving for home until everything eatable and liquid was disposed of.

Now the date of our departure had arrived, and very sad, indeed, was I to leave these people who had done their very best to make me feel at home with them and who seemed to be really fond of me. I consoled Doña Josefita somewhat with the promise that I would return some day and find her the treasure of La Gran Quivira. Don Juan Mestal, the freighter, seemed as reluctant to leave as I was; something was always turning up to delay our start. But at last we were off.

After three days of travel, we came to a small town, where I met a Mexican whom I knew on the Rio Grande, where he had formerly lived. He invited me cordially to the wedding of his sister, which was to be on the next day at old Fort Wingate, an abandoned fort, and then a Mexican settlement. This man said that he had come on purpose to meet me, as he had heard

of my intentions to leave the country. Although I did not like the man, who was said to be jealous of Americans, I accepted his urgent invitation more from curiosity to learn what he meant to do than for other reasons.

The next morning I started early from camp and rode over to the little town, distant fifteen miles. When I arrived in front of my prospective host's house I caught a glimpse of two men, who were sneaking off toward an old corral. Then I knew what was in the wind, for those two men were known to me as desperate cutthroat thieves and highwaymen; their specialty was to waylay and murder American travelers. My kind friend professed to be overmuch delighted at my arrival. He took charge of my horse and invited me into his house, where I met the bridal couple and their friends, who were carousing and gambling. I joined and made merry with them. At ten o'clock the whole party made ready to proceed to the chapel, where the marriage ceremony was to be performed. I simulated the part of a very inebriated person, a condition which they looked forward to with hope and satisfaction, and I told them that I would stay at the house to await their return. When everybody had left I

thought I might as well get under way, as I felt lonesome. I went out and around to the rear of the house, where the corral was, to get my horse. I found the gate fastened with chains and securely locked. The corral walls were built of adobe, and the two walls of it were a continuation of the side walls of the house, and its end wall formed an enclosure or backyard. My horse was there, and I found my saddle in one of the rooms of the building, hidden under a blanket. I entered the corral through the back door of the house, caught and saddled my horse, and then I led him out to the street. This was a very laughable manner of leave-taking. The house was cut up into a labyrinth of small rooms, just large enough for a horse to turn around in, and the doors were low and narrow. I could not find the outer door, and led my horse successively into every room in the house.

There is no furniture such as we use in a typical Spanish dwelling, no bedsteads, tables, or chairs. The inmates squat on divans arranged on the floor around the walls of the rooms, and at nighttime they spread their bedding on the floors. Some of the rooms were nicely carpeted with Mexican rugs. My horse must have

thought he had come to a suite of stables, for he acted accordingly. He nosed around after grain and hay, whinnied and pawed, and seemed to enjoy himself generally. At last I found the right door and came out into the street. Then I rode to the church to tender my best wishes to the happy couple and bid them *adios*. When the party emerged from the chapel they seemed to be very much surprised at seeing me. I told my host that I regretted to leave them so early in the day, but I had an appointment to keep elsewhere. I would ride slowly out of town so that they could overtake me easily, should they wish to see me later, but nobody came, and after several hours I caught up with my companions.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH THE NAVAJO TRIBE

AFTER a couple of days we came to Fort Wingate, which controls the Navajo Indian Reservation. We camped here for a day to have some repair work done to our wagons, and I took a stroll over the hills after rabbits and returned to camp at nightfall. Don Juan told me that he had been visited by a number of Indians, who had bartered him some blankets and buckskins and he was highly pleased thereat.

The next morning we started early and traveled until noon. Several Indians had been following us for some time, and as soon as we made camp they squatted at our fire, while others were continually arriving, some afoot, but most of them on horseback. Manuelito, a grand-looking chief, rode into camp on the finest Indian pony I had ever seen. It was beautifully caparisoned; the saddle, bridle, and trappings were covered with silver mountings. This was by far the most gorgeously dressed Navajo I had ever met. He wore tight-fitting knickerbockers of jet-black buckskin, which resembled velvet, with a double row of silver buttons, set

as close as possible on the outward seams, from top to bottom. On his legs from knee to ankle he wore homespun woolen stockings and his feet were covered by beaded moccasins of yellow, smoke-tanned buckskin. His bright red calico shirt was literally covered with silver ornaments and his ears were pierced with heavy silver rings, at least three inches in diameter. His wrists and arms were heavy with massive silver bracelets and others, carved from a stone, which resembled jade. About his neck he wore strings of wampum and glass beads, garnets, and bits of turquoise. The turquoise and garnet is found here in places known only to these Indians. His fingers were encircled by many rings, but the finest ornament he possessed was his body belt of great disks of silver, the size of tea saucers. All this jewelry was of a fair workmanship, such as is made by Navajo silversmiths out of coin silver. In fact, these Indians prefer silver to gold for purposes of personal adornment. The blanket which this Indian wore around his waist was worth at least two hundred dollars; never have I seen its equal in beauty of pattern and texture.

The chief dismounted and withdrew with Don Juan behind a wagon for a talk, as I pre-

sumed. They reappeared soon, and the chief mounted his steed and cavorted around our camp as one possessed. Furiously lashing his horse, he scattered our cooking utensils and acted in a most provoking manner generally. I noticed then that the noble chief was intoxicated, and when I questioned Don Juan sharply, he admitted that he had given the Indian some whiskey, and on the day before as well. I warned the Don to have no further dealings with these Indians and advised him to break camp at once in order to avoid trouble. I informed him also that he had committed a serious crime by selling liquor to Indians and that he was liable to be arrested at any time should a patrol from the fort happen our way. As the Mexican was frightened now, we took to the road in a hurry and traveled until a late hour that night. In fact, we did not stop until the cattle were exhausted.

Hardly had we prepared our camp and were sitting around our fire, when a horde of Indians appeared, clamoring for whiskey. As they were armed and threatening, Don Juan became so terrified that he climbed to the interior of a wagon to comply with the demand of the savages. When I saw this, I drew my rifle from its

place under my bedding and placed it in readiness. Plainly I saw Don Juan come out of the wagon with the mischievous stone jug, as this happened in the bright light of our camp fire. That will never do, thought I, and quickly drawing my revolver, I persuaded the Don to drop the jug, incidentally smashing it with a 44 caliber bullet, taking care not to hurt anybody; and this was easily done, as the jug was a large one, it held three gallons. Instantaneously I grabbed my Winchester, and with my back against a wagon I stood ready for action. The Indians uttered a howl of disappointment when they saw the jug collapse and its precious contents wasted, but were silenced by an exclamation of their chief. After an excited pow-wow between themselves, they disappeared among the hills in the shadows of the night.

"Muchas gracias, señor Americano," said Don Juan, *"quien sabe?"* What would have happened if the Indians had gotten the liquor, which I dared not refuse them; but I think this ends our troubles. We passed a sleepless night, and long before sunrise Don Juan made preparations for our departure.

When the herders rounded up the cattle, they found that several yoke of oxen were missing,

and greatly alarmed, they said that they believed the Indians had stolen them during the night. Don Juan did not appear to be very anxious to search for the missing cattle himself, so he sent out the herders again after breakfast. They returned with the report of having found the tracks of Indians who had apparently driven the cattle toward the hills, and they stated that they were afraid to follow, fearing for their lives.

As it was nearly noon by this time, we cooked our dinner, and while doing so were visited again by a number of the Indians. Don Juan intimated to them that several of his oxen had strayed off during the night, and the Navajos kindly offered to go in search of them for a remuneration. They demanded a stack of tortillas a foot high and a sack of flour. *Nolens-volens*, squatted Don Mestal before the fire and baked bread for the wily Indians as a ransom for his cattle. Of course then the missing oxen were soon brought up, and we lost no time in getting under way.

Until midnight we traveled, as Don Juan was very anxious to get away from the reservation of these Indians, which is seventy-five miles across. This night we experienced a repetition

of the tactics of the night before, as regarded the safety of our herd, but Don Juan had to pay a higher ransom in the morning. While we were awaiting the arrival of the Indians with our lost steers, Chief Manuelito honored us again with his presence. He sat down at our fire, and producing a greasy deck of Spanish playing cards, he challenged Don Juan to a game of monte. That was an irresistible temptation for my companion. By the smiling expression of his wizened features I divined that he thought he saw his chance for revenge. Manuelito undoubtedly had a strain of sporting blood in his veins, as he offered to stake his horses, blankets, squaws, and everything he had against the Mexican's wagons and cargo. I warned Don Juan to have a care, as I knew the cunning of the Navajo tribe, having dealt with them before, and I advised him to play the traps he had bought from them with liquor against a chipper little squaw who was richly dressed and had come with Chief Manuelito, mounted on a white pony. I believed her to be the chief's daughter. When she understood the import of the conversation, she looked haughtily and in a disdainful manner at Don Juan, but appeared to be pleased with me and eyed me with symp-

toms of curiosity. Of course, I expected her to defy Don Juan to take her, and simply ride off in case he should win the game. At any rate, I meant to take her under my protection, if necessary, and send her home to her people. In fact, the liquor which Don Juan had sold these Indians had belonged to me and had been presented to me by a friend as an antidote for possible snake bites on the road to Arizona.

The gambling began, and my Mexican companions became so engrossed in the enjoyment of their alluring national game of monte that they forgot everything else. The drivers were as interested as their employer and bet the poor trinkets they possessed on the result of the game. There arrived more Indians continually, and I observed a familiar face amongst these and saw that I myself was recognized. The game was ended as I had foreseen, with Don Juan as the loser. He was an easy prey for these Indians, who are as full of tricks as the ocean is of water.

Then Chief Manuelito, who was highly elated with his victory over the Mexican, challenged me to a game in a very overbearing and provoking manner. I replied that I despised the game of monte, which was perhaps good enough for Mexicans and Indians, but was de-

cided by chance; I boasted that I was ready to bet anything I had on my skill at shooting with the rifle, and challenged him and his whole tribe to the sport which was worthy of men, a shooting match. I think Manuelito would have accepted my challenge without hesitation and in great glee if he had not been restrained by the Indian whom I have mentioned before as having just arrived and recognized me. This Indian said something to the chief, which seemed to interest and excite them all. Chief Manuelito advanced, and extending his hand in greeting, said that he had often wished to meet me, the wizard who had beaten the champion marksman of the Navajo tribe.

Several years before I had in the town of Cubero, at the request of Mexican friends, shot a target match with the most renowned marksman of the Navajo tribe, my pistol being pitted against the Navajo's rifle, and I had beaten him with a wonderful shot to the discomfiture and distress of a trading band of Indians, who bet on their champion's prowess and lost their goods to the knowing Mexicans.

The chief then requested me to favor them with an exhibition of my skill. I readily assented and directed them to put up a target.

They placed a flat rock against the trunk of a pine tree at so great a distance that it was barely distinguishable to the naked eye. I guessed at the distance and my shot fell just below the mark. Then I raised the hind sight of my Winchester a notch and the next shot shattered the stone to pieces. At this the Indians went wild. They had thought it impossible for any man to perform this feat of marksmanship, and were most enthusiastic in the profession of their admiration. Gladly would they have adopted me into their tribe as a great chief or medicine man had I wished to ally myself to them. There was the opportunity of a lifetime, but I did not embrace it.

As the sun was now low in the heavens, I advised Don Juan to remain in camp for the night and spoke to Chief Manuelito, expressing my wish to pass through his country unmolested and without delay. The chief assured me of his protection and bade us have no care. We slept soundly that night, a band of Indians guarding our camp and herd under orders of Manuelito, who had become my stanch friend and admirer. The following day we came to the end of the reservation and soon crossed the boundary line of New Mexico into Arizona.

CHAPTER IX

IN ARIZONA

ARIZONA was drawing me to her heart, to Prescott, the beautiful young mountain city, which rests in the bosom of Yavapai, her grandest and richest county. Rich in its thousands upon thousands of cattle, sheep, and Angoras, in its balmy pine forests, in the grandeur of its canyons, mesas and mountains and its fruitful valleys; rich in the worthiness of its sturdy, energetic men, richer still in the unsurpassed loveliness of its women—but richest beyond all lands on earth in the unmeasured wealth of its precious metals, which are attracting the attention of a wondering world.

I left New Mexico with the intention of making Los Angeles in the golden State my future home, and now, thirty years later, I have not reached there yet. Vainly have I tried to break the thraldom of my fate, for I did not know that here I was to meet face to face with the mighty mystery of an ancient cult, the God of a long-forgotten civilization, a psychic power

which has ordered my path in life and controlled my actions.

As its servant, at its bidding, I write this, and shall now unfold, and in the course of this narrative give to the world a surprising revelation of the power of ancient Aztec idols, which would be incredible in the light of our twentieth century of Christian civilization if it were not sustained by the evidence of undeniable facts.

Our road led through a hilly country toward the Little Colorado River. In the distance loomed the San Francisco Mountains, extinct craters which had belched fire and lava long, long ago at the birth of Arizona, when the earth was still in the travail of creation. We forded the Little Colorado at Sunset Crossing, a lonely colony, where a few Mormons were the only inhabitants of a vast area of wilderness. We were headed due west toward a mesa rising abruptly from the plateau which we were then traversing. This mesa was again capped by a chain of lofty peaks, one of the Mogollon mountain ranges. We ascended the towering mesa through the difficult Chavez pass, which is named after its discoverer, the noted Mexican, Colonel Francisco Chavez, who may be remembered as a representative in Congress of the

United States, for the Territory of New Mexico. A day's heavy toil brought us to the summit of the mesa, which was a beautiful place, but unspeakably lonesome. This wonderful highland is a malpais or lava formation and densely covered with a forest of stately pines and mountain juniper. Strange to say, vegetation thrives incredibly in the rocky lava; a knee-high growth of the most nutritious grama grasses, indigent to this region, rippled in the breeze like waves of a golden sea and we saw numerous signs of deer, antelope, and turkey. Our road, a mere trail, wound over this plateau, which was a veritable impenetrable jungle in places, a part of the great Coconino forest. Think and wonder! An unbroken forest of ten thousand square miles, it is said to be the most extensive woodland on the face of the globe. This trail was the worst road to travel I have seen or expect ever to pass over. The wagons moved as ships tossed on a stormy sea, chuck! chuck! from boulder to boulder, without intermittence. We found delicious spring water about noon and passed a most remarkable place later in the day. This must have been the pit of a volcano. A few steps aside from the road you might lean over the precipice and look straight down into

a great, round crater, so deep that it made a person dizzy. At the bottom there was a ranch house, a small lake and a cultivated field, the whole being apparently ten acres in area. I looked straight down on a man who was walking near the house and appeared no larger than a little doll and his dog seemed to be the size of a grasshopper, but we heard the dog bark and heard the cackling of hens quite plainly. On one side of this pit there was a break in the formation, which made this curious place accessible by trail.

We had been advised that we would find a natural tank of rain water in the vicinity of this place and camped there at nightfall. We turned our stock out, but our herders did not find the promised water. Our cook reported that there was not a drop of water in camp, as the spigot of his water tank had been loosened by the roughness of the road and all the water was lost. Now this would have been a matter of small consequence if Don Juan had not been taken ill all of a sudden. He threw himself on the ground and cried for water. *"Agua, por Dios!"* (Water, for God's sake) he cried, "or I shall die." "Why, Don Juan," I said, "there is no water here. I advise you to wait till moonrise when

the cattle are rested and then leave for the next watering place, which is Beaver Head, at the foot of the mesa; we ought to reach there about ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Surely until then you can endure a little thirst!" "*Amigo,* I cannot, I am dying," moaned Don Juan, in great distress. As I suspected that he had lost his nerve on the Navajo reservation, I felt greatly annoyed, and when he became frantic in his cries I promised to go down to Beaver Creek to get him a drink of water, for I recalled to mind his little daughter who bid me farewell with these wrds: "*Adios, Señor Americano,* I charge you with the care of my *padrecito.* If you promise me, I know that he will return to me safely."

I set out on my long night-walk, stumbling over rocks and boulders in the darkness. It was a beautiful night, the crisp atmosphere was laden with the fragrant exhalation of the nut pines and junipers and there was not a breath of air stirring. I got down to water at midnight, the time of moonrise, filled my canteen and started on the return trip. Slowly I reascended the steep mesa, and when I reached the summit I sat down on a rock in a thicket of junipers. The moon had now risen above the trees and cast its dim light over an enchanting scene.

The sense of utter loneliness, a homesickness, a feeling of premonition, stole over me, and weirdly I sensed the presence of I knew not what. From the shadows spoke an owl, sadly, anxiously, "Hoo, hoo! Where are you? You!" and his mate answered him tenderly, seductively, "Tee, hee! Come to me! Me!"

In the west, far, far away, clustered a range of mountains, spread out like an enormous horseshoe and in its center arose the form of a solitary hill. In the heavens from the east drifted a white, ragged cloud. The solitary hill seemed to rise high and higher and all the mountains bowed before it. The spectral cloud resolved itself into a terrible vision which enveloped the central hill. Great Heavens! Again I saw the phantom dog and fancied that I heard shrill screams of *"Perro, perro, gringo perro!"* A crackling noise, a coming shadow, and forward I fell on my face, ever on the alert, ever ready. An unearthly yell and a great body flew over, fierce claws grazing me. Two balls of fire shone in the bush, but my rifle cracked and a great lion fell in its tracks. I expected my companions to meet me soon, coming my way. Instead, I found them, after my all-night's walk, snugly camped where I had left them. Don Juan ex-

plained that with God's favor they had found the water soon after I had left them. He said that they had called loud and long after me, but I did not seem to hear.

This day we descended the mesa and entered the valley of the Verde River, one of Arizona's permanent water courses. This valley is cultivated for at least forty miles from its source to where it enters precipitous mountains. We forded the crystal waters of the river at Camp Verde, an army post, and crossed another range of mountains and several valleys into a comparatively open country, and on the night of a day late in November we camped on Lynx Creek and were then within a half day's travel of our destination.

CHAPTER X

AT THE SHRINE OF A "SPHINX OF AZTLAN"

NOT a drop of rain had fallen on us since we left the Rio Grande, the days were as summer in a northern climate, but the nights were quite chill, the effect of an altitude of five thousand feet above sea level. The country had lost its appearance of loneliness, for we passed several parties of miners and heard the heavy booming of giant powder at intervals, and from various directions all through the day.

We were joined by a jolly party of miners from Prescott, who were eager for news and camped with us over night. There were three men in this outfit. Keen-looking, hearty old chaps with ruddy faces and gray beards, they looked like men who are continually prospecting for the "main chance." I passed a delightful evening in their company. They said they owned rich silver mines farther up on Lynx Creek, and had come out from town to perform the annual assessment work on their claims, as prescribed by the laws of the United States, in order to hold possession and perfect legal title to the ground.

As I was not versed in matters pertaining to mines, I asked why they did not work their mines continually for the silver. They explained that they could not work to good advantage for lack of transportation facilities which made it very difficult and costly to bring in machinery for developing their prospects into mines. Therefore, until the advent of railroads they chose to perform their annual assessment work only.

Two of these gentlemen were substantial business men in Prescott and the other was their confidential secretary or affidavit man. It was his duty to make an affidavit before a magistrate that his employers had performed the labor required by law, which is not less than one hundred dollars per claim and incidentally he cooked for the outfit and attended to the horses. Of course, they might have hired mine laborers to do this work, but they said they enjoyed the outing and exercise, especially as this was the time of house cleaning in Prescott and they were glad to get away from home. "Yes," affirmed the affidavit man, "and so are your wives."

These gentlemen rode horses and carried a supply of provisions on a pack mule. The most

conspicuous object of their pack was a keg labelled "dynamite." When the clerk placed this dangerous thing near the fire and sat on it, I became fidgety, but was reassured when subsequently I saw him draw the stopper and fill a bottle labelled "Old Crow" from it. They advised me to go prospecting and gave me much valuable information and kindly offered to sell me a prospecting outfit, "for cash," at their stores in Prescott.

As we were chatting, I became aware of a delicious, pungent odor, like the perfume of orange blossoms. "Is it possible," said I, astonished, "that there are orange groves in bloom in this vicinity?" The old gentlemen said they did not smell anything wrong, but the clerk jumped to his feet and sniffed the air in the direction of Prescott. "Why, gentlemen," said he, "of course, you cannot smell any further than the blossoms on the tips of your noses, but the young man has a sharp proboscis, he scents the girls. Here comes Dan bound for the Silver Bell Mine with his blooming show." We heard the clatter of hoofs and wheels and saw a large coach pass by, crowded with passengers, mostly ladies. The clerk said that the genial owner of the Silver Bell Mine, who was also the pro-

prietor of a popular resort in town, was going out to pay his miners their monthly wage. "That is it," said one of the merchants, "and to keep the boys from leaving the mine in order to spend their money at his resort in town, he takes his variety show out there. He cannot afford to have his mine shut down just now, as they have struck horn silver, and that is the kind of tin he needs in his business."

These kind old gentlemen cautioned me to keep away from a dark-looking, broken mountain, looming to the north. "That country is no good," they said; "there is nothing but copper there, even the water is poisoned with it." Those were the black hills where there is now the prosperous town of Jerome and one of the great mines of the earth, the famous United Verde Mine, the property of Senator William Clark.

The following day, about noon, we rounded a sharp bend of the road and Fort Whipple and the town of Prescott came into view. A pretty and gratifying sight truly, but imagine my astonishment! Here to the right of Prescott was the identical mysterious hill which I had seen in that memorable night from the height of the Mogollon mesa and behind it was the black

range, the Sierra Prieta, which had formed a part of the encircling horseshoe.

Never in my lifetime have I come to a town where the people were as hospitable and kindly disposed toward strangers as here. It is no wonder that I got no farther, for here the people vied with each other to welcome the wayfarer to the gates of their city. The town was then young and isolated. The inhabitants had come by teams or horseback from as far away as the State of Kansas, where the nearest railway connection was eastward, or from California, via Yuma and Ehrenberg on the Colorado River. Stages and freight teams made regular trips across the arid desert to Ehrenberg. The first settlers of this region came from California in search of gold. They first found it in the sands of the Hassayampa, which is born of mighty Mount Union, the mother of four living streams. From its deathbed in the hot sands of the desert, they traced the precious waters to its source. Gold they found in plenty and hardship and privation. They encountered a band of hostile Indians, and hardest to bear, a loneliness made sufferable only by the illusive phantasies of the golden fever. Their expectations realized, the majority of these pioneers returned to the

Golden State and civilization with the burden of their treasure, saying they had not come to Arizona for their health. Now in these present days there comes a throng of people in quest of health solely, and many are they who find its blessing in the sunny and bracing air of this climate and in the balmy breath of the fir and juniper of our mountains.

I found employment in a mercantile establishment of this little mining town and grew up with the country, as the saying is. I formed new acquaintances and made new friends. Among others, I met William Owen O'Neill. I cannot now remember the exact time of year attracted by the light-hearted, cheerful, and dare-devil spirit of this ambitious and cultured young man, I joined a military organization, of which he was then a lieutenant and later the captain, this was Company F of Prescott Grays, National Guard of Arizona. Poor, noble-hearted, generous Buckie—he knew it not, but this was his first step on the path of glory leading to the altar of patriotism whereon he laid his life. It was he who, with a poet's inspiration, first divined the mystery of the mountain which I have before alluded to. He likened this beautiful mound to a sleeping lion who guarded the des-

tinies of the mountain city. Poor friend, his glorious song stirred the dormant life in the metallic veins of the Butte and, wonder of wonders, the sleeping lion awoke, the poet's lay had brought the Sphinx to life—the die of fate was cast for Buckie and he had sealed his doom! When I read his beautiful poem, I gasped in wonder, for only I on earth fathomed the significance of this revelation. This dream of a poet's fanciful soul, soaring on the wings of Pegasus, was stern reality to me and anxiously I awaited developments. Nor waited I in vain.

The grateful Sphinx showered honor and wealth upon my friend. The generous sportive boy, who cared naught for gold, actually grew rich, for the Sphinx had granted him the most lucrative office in the county, the people made him their sheriff. He rose step by step to the highest place of honor in the community until he became the mayor of Prescott. Not satisfied with this token of its favor, the Sphinx rewarded him in a most extraordinary and convincing manner. By the help of nature, its helpmeet, it transformed a great deposit of siliceous limestone into beautiful onyx and painted it in all the colors and after the pattern of the rainbow. This magnificent gift made Captain

O'Neill independently rich, but it is a fact that as soon as it passed from his hands, the stone lost in value and no one has since profited from it.

I believe that our hero would have risen to the highest position of dignity on earth, the Presidency of the United States, if he had not unwittingly aroused the jealousy of the terrible heathen god. When he chose a charming wife from the lovely maidens of Prescott, then the vengeful Sphinx laid its sinister plans for his undoing, for it is in the nature of cats, small or great, to be exceedingly jealous. The furious idol remembered the people of a long forgotten race, its loyal subjects, who had reared and worshiped it, inconceivably long ago, when the Grand Canyon of Arizona was but a tiny ravine and before icy avalanches had ground the rocks at the Dells into boulders. It remembered the descendants of its subjects, the Aztec Indians. It remembered how the Spaniards had cruelly broken the Aztec nation. Through the subtle influence of psychic forces, it stirred up a passion of hate for Spain in the hearts of the people of the United States, and it fostered the awful spirit of strife, and at the right moment it let loose the dogs of war. One convulsive touch of its rocky claws on the hidden

currents coursing in earth's veins and an evil spark fired the fatal mine under the battleship *Maine,* in the harbor of Havana.

"Is this possible; can this be true?" If not, why is it that at the call to arms, even before the nation rallied from the shock of the cowardly deed which sacrificed the lives of inoffensive sailors—why is it, I say, that from under the very paws of the Sphinx, so far away in Arizona—and at the call of Captain O'Neill, the noble mayor of Prescott, there arose the first contingent of fighting volunteers in our war with Spain? The inexorable Sphinx had resolved to grant to our beloved and honored friend its last and most exalted gift, a hero's death on the field of battle. It has graven the name of Prescott, the city of the Sphinx, on scrolls of everlasting fame, as the town which rallied first to the call of the President and as the only town which gave the life of its mayor, its first, its most honored citizen, to the nation.

On the isle of Cuba, in the battle of San Juan Hill, fell the gallant Captain William Owen O'Neill of the regiment of Rough Riders. Peace to his ashes!

I have been told the circumstances surrounding his death by friends, who were soldiers of his

company. They were lying under cover behind every available shelter to dodge a hailstorm of Mauser bullets, awaiting the order to advance. Captain O'Neill exposed himself and was instantly killed. How could he avoid it? How could it have been otherwise? What can keep an Irishman down in the ditch when bullets are flying in air, "murmuring dirges" and "shells are shrieking requiems? You may readily imagine an Irishman on the firing line, poking his head above the ground, exclaiming: "Did yez see that? And where did that Dago pill come from now? Shure it spoke Spanish, but it did not hit me at all, at all, Begorra!" And just think of the newspaper-war-correspondent in front of Port Arthur! He thought he saw the scoop of a lifetime and up he jumped, to be first to interview the bullet which killed him.

The activity of the Sphinx ended not with the battle of San Juan Hill, for it cast the luster of its glorious power on the gallant Lieutenant Colonel of the famous regiment of Rough Riders, Theodore Roosevelt, and on him it conferred in time the greatest honor to be achieved on earth, it made him President of the United States of America. Not knowing it, perhaps, he still is at the time of this writing in the sphere of influence

and in the power of the Sphinx and is doing its bidding. Else why should he, as is well known, favor the jointure of New Mexico and Arizona into one State? Surely the loyal subjects of the Sphinx, the Pueblo Indians of Aztec blood, live mostly in New Mexico, and the cunning idol plans to deliver them out of the hands of the Spanish Mexicans, and place them under the protection and care of the Americans of Arizona, knowing full well that the Anglo-Saxon blood will rule.

Every miner and prospector of Arizona knows that there have been found and are found to this day nuggets of pure gold and silver on the summit of barren hills, in localities and under geological conditions which are not to be reckoned as possible natural phenomena. Whence came the golden nuggets found on the summit of Rich Hill at Weaver, where a party of men gathered two hundred thousand dollars worth of gold in a week's time? Whence came the isolated great chunk of silver at Turkey Creek, valued at many thousands? The wisest professor of geology and expert of mines cannot explain it. This, I say, is the gold and silver from ornaments employed in temples of the idols of ancient races, who lived unthinkable

thousands of years ago. The very stones of their temples have crumbled and been decomposed, but the precious metal has been formed into nuggets, according to the natural laws of molecular attraction, and under the impulse of gravity and in obedience to the laws of affinity of matter.

People from Prescott in their rambles in the vicinity of Thumb Butte have probably noticed a slag pile as from a furnace. I have heard them theorize and argue on the question of its origin or use, as there is not a sign of ore in existence thereabout to indicate an ancient smelting furnace. I say this was an altar erected by the ancient worshipers to their idol, the Sphinx. Before it stood the awful sacrificial stone, whereon quivered the bodies of victims while priests tore open their breasts and offered their throbbing hearts in the sacred fire on the altar, a sacrifice to their cruel god. Many prospectors have undoubtedly traced a blood red vein of rock coursing from this place toward Willow Creek—a valuable lode of cinnabar, they must have thought. If they had tested the ore for quicksilver, they would have received discouraging results. Porphyry stained with an unknown petrified sub-

stance and without a trace of metal invariably read the analytical assays.

This is the innocent, petrified blood of victims which stained a ledge of porphyry when it ran down the mountain side in torrents, an awful sacrifice to the ancient idols of lust and ignorance. A kindly warning to you, fellow-prospectors and miners, who delve in the vitals of Mother Earth! Beware Thumb Butte, beware the district of the Sphinx! Have a care, for you know not what you may encounter in this mystic neighborhood! Shun strange gods and set up no idols in your hearts, as you value the salvation of your souls. But if your mine lies in this district, be fearful not to excite the anger of the gnomes of the mountain. Charge lightly, lest you blast the bottom out of your mine. Disturb not the slumber of the spirits of the hills lest they throw a horse into the shaft and push your pay-ore down a thousand feet. Observe the omens! Ascertain first where your pay ore lies, then sink your shaft accordingly, so as to keep your pay streak in the east; throw down a horseshoe and a pinch of salt for luck before descending.

Now, I who am what I am, a servant of the Sphinx, have erected the shrine of my household

gods in the beautiful town, which lies in its shadow and is held in its paw. Even now is the Sphinx weaving on the web of my destiny. I hope I may be spared the cumbersome burden of the wealth of a Rockefeller, who is said to possess a billion dollars for every hair on his head. One thousandth part of his wealth would suffice to reward me amply.

I received a message in a dream, in a vision of the night, a promise from the Sphinx. I fancied that I was on Lynx Creek, sitting on the windlass at the shaft of my silver mine. This mine is within a mile of the place where we had camped and met the party of Prescott men. I had worked the mine with profit until I met, through no fault of mine, with a fault in the mine and encountered a horse in the formation which faulted the ground in such a manner as to interrupt the pay chute and to make further work unprofitable.

While I sat there, lighting my pipe and blessing my luck, I saw a great black tomcat come along and jump my claim. As I have always detested claim jumpers, I threw a rock at him and with an uncanny mee-ow and bristling tail he disappeared down the mine. When I went to the spot where he had scratched, after the fashion

of cats, probably preparing to build his location monument and place his notice, I was thunderstruck to see that the rock I had thrown at him had been transformed into a chunk of pure gold.

That this was not an ordinary, common sort of dream only is shown by the following strange coincidence of circumstances.

The morning after my dream, my pet house cat, a big, black Tom, approached me, with an uncanny mee-ow and bristling tail and gave me a wistful, sly look, and wink of his eye. Then he ran away, and to this day has not been seen in the town of Prescott. Surely where that cat jumped into the mine, there lies a bonanza, there shall I sink to the water level.

From the time of my youth have I always possessed great bodily strength and physical endurance, combined with good health, and now, at an age when other men deteriorate, I am, if anything, stronger in body than ever and am blessed with the identical passions and thoughts I harbored in the days of my youth. To me this signifies that my life's real task is now beginning, the Sphinx is fitting me for glorious work. What and where, I care not; but ambitious hope leads me on, past wealth and power to visions of a temple of divine, pictorial art. Fain would I

guide my light, frivolous thoughts long enough into the calm channels of serious reflection to bid you, my kind readers, a dignified farewell and express the sincere hope that, when we have prospected life's mortal vein to the end of time and our souls soar on the last blast of Gabriel's trumpet to shining sands on shores of bliss eternal,

"Where earthly pride is not
And all terrestrial sorrow melts in hallowed rays of a most Holy Presence;
Where Angels sing forever the Glory of undying Love,
There may we meet—
In Heaven!"

THE END

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